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A MEMORY OF EDWARD THRING

Yours affectionately
Edward Perry

A MEMORY

OF

EDWARD THRING

BY

JOHN HUNTLEY SKRINE

WARDEN OF GLENALMOND

"Seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever."

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1889

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RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
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PREFACE.

THIS work is not a Biography of Edward Thring. It deals only with one main aspect of his career, during one period of it. It is what its title professes—a Memory: the memory of a single observer, unhelped by any materials beyond the few letters and memoranda which are in his own possession.

But it is the memory of Edward Thring owned by one who for seven years was a boy in his school, and for five a pupil in his class; who for fourteen years was a worker at his side, in ties of nearest intimacy; and who has held this memorial to be a debt upon his future powers, since the evening when his great master bent over a young boy's rhyme, and said, "You shall write my epitaph."

J. H. S.

GLENALMOND,
October 22nd, 1889.

Epitaphia.

Rhyme was thine asking. But now,
  Wise in thy victories done,
Ask, for our nurture-due, thou,
  Deeds in thy battles unwon:—
Leader, a follower's vow;
  Father, the truth of a son.

I DEDICATE

THIS MEMORY OF OUR MASTER

TO THOSE MANY

WHO PRAISE IN SILENCE

HIM WHO TAUGHT THEM

THE WORTH OF LIFE.

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PART I.

THE MASTER.

MY "BIG SCHOOL."

NEW WALLS.

Slow rose of breathed adamant the wall
Of Troy, as wave on wave of charmed sound
Hung, crystal fixed, the holy centre round,
Close-bonded light and music girding all.
So on the old School came a spirit-call,
Stirred the deep harp which thrice a hundred years
Had strung with all their gladness, all their tears
Made light and faith in living music fall.
Then rose the strong foundations; to the sound
Of ghostly chant, and angel whispers grew
Tier upon tier of melody spell-bound,
To last while lasts the heavenly strain. O you,
Who dwell within the circle, wiser found,
Cheat not the immortal builder of his due.

EDWARD THRING.

A man has not
lived in vain who has awakened
in hearts that live such a
feeling of life.

A MEMORY OF EDWARD THRING.

CHAPTER I.

MY "BIG SCHOOL."

"I AM on the eve of a romance. I am to go a journey, ten times as long as any I ever took, across England to my 'big school.' It is not a very big one, nor very well known yet. But it will be, some day, says my tutor, for the headmaster is a great man."

So thought a youngster of twelve years, as he wished good-bye to home on a February morning; and *Tom Brown's Schooldays* were in his head all the long journey. It ended in a tedious jolting, late at night, over snowy roads. He can still see the scrubby ash trees in the wayside hedge, jolting past the frozen windows; then the thin lights of a poor street. There is a stop before an archway, for the unclosing of some huge wooden gates, which let into a little quadrangle, with a half dozen

flitting figures in it: presently he is blinking in the lamp-light of a bright room. A short, firm, angular figure, with a keen eye, strides up to the door and welcomes me. It is the great man, I know. I remark to myself that he ought to be bigger, but it is something else than this want of size which makes me feel not afraid of him. Half an hour later, lying in bed, with the awful sense of some seven unknown and perhaps formidable beings behind the neighbouring curtains, I hear a quick, strong step at the door, and the light is turned out to a succinct, military "Good-night." I don't know what there was in those very familiar words, but, as I replied to them, my heart seemed to say to itself, "My headmaster!" meaning it as a soldier might say "My general!" Then I was gathered to dreamland.

The disappointments of the next day are present still to my mind. In the course of the leisurely dressing of a new boy exempted from the first early school, I looked out of the dormitory window upon the schoolhouse quadrangle. A range of small cells, just wide enough for a window and a door opening upon the snows of the court, was before me. Pinched and bleak little places they looked. "The studies," I thought; and then, "what a fuss my tutor made

about these poor little sentry-boxes." A dream of luxury had expired on the chill February air.

Then, when I had breakfasted, undergone brief examination, and spent my first two hours in company of my benevolent class-master, I found a friend, and with him made the better acquaintance of Uppingham. "The town of Uppingham," says an old writer with injurious brevity, "consisteth of one meane streete." It consisted of no more when my schoolfellow and myself set out to warm our frozen toes on the kidney stones of its inhospitable pavement. But it had recovered in the last half decade from the dishevelment of a country town in decay, from the broken glass and notice-boards of derelict houses; for there was new blood in the old veins again. Six boarding-houses, two of them new, the rest pinched and shabby, but made to serve the turn by piecing and patching, lined the street in its upper end near the schoolhouse. Other buildings the school had none, except the venerable but homely schoolroom of Archdeacon Johnson, bearing graven on it the date 1584 and a trilingual inscription, which served at this time for chapel; and a gymnasium, quite lately built by the new headmaster, and the first owned by a public school, which stood at a corner of the

schoolhouse. In all this I could not discover the grandeur of a "big school," as my dreams had painted it. The place had no presence. We left the town, and passing a gaunt, impressive, black-trunked windmill, escaped into the Rutland pastures. It is the most rural tract in England, and grows on the square mile one man to every three of other neighbourhoods, and, though the natural features of the country are not strongly marked, there is right pleasant wandering to be had over the deep rich grass of the meadows, under the covert-sides, and along the oily little water-courses that trickle through the clays towards the Eye and the Welland. But at that iron season the long hill ridges, naked of trees except for a few wayside ashes, wore a cheerless, unhomely aspect to eyes fresh from one of the soft southern shires. The new boy came back to his Latin verses downcast and chill. "Where then is the romance of school?" Ah! youngster, wait a little.

The manner of our days at Uppingham was this. At seven o'clock, or in summer at half-past six, a bell broke our slumbers. Half an hour later or almost, we rushed past a præpostor with his hand on the hall door-handle, and fell into the ranks, fastening the last button as we did so, for morning

prayers. Under the great window at the top of the room stood the headmaster, gowned, and at this time of day somewhat grim, his eyes upon the door. Woe worth the præpostor who does not shut it at the last stroke of the church clock. One zealot of that order I recall (but that was long after), who banged the door just half a minute before the crazy old time-piece had signalled, upon two hundred and thirty boys and six masters. Excluded wretches prowled outside, like Hyemantes, till our devotions were ended: then entered, and at the headmaster's desk, under scorching eyes, wrote their names in the late-book. It was as if a soul were registering its own misdeed, under the dictation of the Recording Angel.

Meanwhile, within, the Psalms are being read. He reads them as no one else, taking a great joy, as it seems to us, in the fierce ones. One verse we always looked out for, on the third evening of the month: "the foundations of the round world were discovered at thy chiding, O Lord: *at the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure.*" You heard the flap of the thunder as he rolled it out. Just so on a Sunday, at least during his early fighting years, he would bid us "pray for the whole state of Christ's Church," with a pause and an explosive

utterance of the "*militant* here in earth," as if he were giving a word of command under fire. And strangers who had been little impressed by an interview, would come away from a service, and say they thought of him differently now they had heard him read the Commandments. No wonder. As those deep, uncompromising tones dealt out the sentences, you felt that there stood before you "the categorical imperative individualized." Alas! it was these he stood up to read to us that morning when—— But it is long ere that. Back to my story.

Prayers over, we separated for first lesson in our classmasters' houses. Thence home to breakfast, and the hall fire—always crowded up with a three-deep circle, faces outwards, the littlest outermost and freezing, the big Triarii roasting against the blaze, small fags spitting vast squares of bread upon toasting-forks, and diving through the triple row of legs, in haste to make cinders of them for the sixth form table. (I thank the dear old pedagogue who taught me Greek grammar, I never was a fag.) Then entry of sixth form, and a relief of the congestion, especially if the headmaster had recently had a fling in sermon or speech at "selfish louts who push a little boy from the fire." After

breakfast, and an interval during which tasks were conned in the studies, we met again for a roll-call in the hall. It was a crowded and murmurous place, the hum of a hundred and a half repetition lessons going up, in the few minutes before ten o'clock and the headmaster's entry. Less occupied juniors would scuffle in the gangways, till the vigilant præpostor (they just *were* præpostors in those days) had cuffed their heads or otherwise inflicted not honourable wounds. Upon such a group would dash, springing up the steps *aprino cursu*, like another great West Countryman, out of the tortuous passage from his study, the headmaster, asking with mock awfulness "Did they want him to shin his way through?" That was if he was in a cheerful temper, and there were no severe business on hand. For it was at this time, after he had called the list, which he always did himself, that he would address us, if school successes had to be announced, or, more commonly, school sins condemned. Perhaps we had been breaking a farmer's fences, or trampling his crops, and had to be reminded how our large liberty to ramble where we liked hung on our own good sense, and might be jeoparded "by a few donkeys." Perhaps we had been engaging in venial but not chivalrous warfare

with the village boys, who laid ambushes for us in thievish corners, and it was well we should know at once what "cads" we were. Or we had been misbehaving on the way to or from church, or on other solemn occasion, and he would set us up a glass in which we scanned the lineaments of "parish louts" lately emancipated from school. Of denunciatory terms he had a repertory Shakesperian in its wealth and pungency :—"unmitigated jackasses," "stupendous idiots," "unadulterated mooncalves," "grocer's assistants" (name of doubtful interpretation), "louts," "dolts," "noodles," "sneaks," "traitors," "rebels," "pothouse heroes," "dead horses," "curveting carthorses," "supercilious ditto," etc., etc. This is but a hasty and beggarly florilegium. But indeed when I recall the note of joy, infectious joy, in strenuous epithets, which lent a novel quality even to the most familiar accents of abuse, I feel that any collection is but a *hortus siccus* of specimens, from which the bloom and aroma have exhaled.

But perhaps it was a case of bullying. Then he was tremendous. If a bully were really the coward which a pious fiction pronounces him, he could hardly have survived the storm. But there was no hurling of epithets. It was too bad for

that. The unfeigned, pent-up indignation spoke far plainer in the simple, searching, moderated phrase for which he exchanged his hyperboles whenever he was deeply moved. Bullying could not have thriven under him if he had done no more than speak, and as a fact that evil old custom was, I believe, by no one put down so soon and so irrevocably, as by Edward Thring at Uppingham. He knew how to sear the hydra as well as cut its head off.

Yet he was most himself when it was a case of dishonesty in work. Some one has been caught, let us say, using a "crib," or copying his neighbour's verses. Then the sequel would be this:—

"A very disgraceful thing has been brought to my notice. Two of you have been cheating in work. I mean the school to know what I think of this kind of thing. I hold that to cheat a master is inexpressibly base. You may call it what you please: I call it sheer, unmitigated, contemptible lying: you who do it are liars and cheats. Oh! yes, I know the mean things you say to yourselves, some of you, in your mean hearts, about its being natural for boys, and 'they all do it at other schools,' and the rest of the pitiful talk. But we are not 'other schools.' There have been times,

and I knew them well enough, when schools were like prisons, and there was some wretched kind of excuse for cheating your gaolers. But you don't live in a prison here. We make your life free and pleasant, we trust you, we make your temptations few, we make it easy to live a true life—and then you turn traitors to truth. Now, which you will! The prison, if you prefer; bars and bolts (I could make a prison if I chose); or the free life of a true society. But you sha'n't have both. You shall not be traitors and have the privilege of true men.

"Now I am not going to waste words upon A and B——. I hold that the whole school is responsible for these wrong-doings. Any society can put down offences committed by individuals, if it chooses. Why don't thieves break the windows of jewellers' shops in Regent Street? The policeman, you say? Why, he may be safe round the corner. No; it's because the rogue knows that every honest hand in the crowd would be upon him. People don't like thieves. It is society that keeps down stealing. And your society can keep down lying and cheating. And I am going to help you. The form, in which the cheats are, will be excluded from the cricket field for a week, and will take their exercise walking two and two on the Leicester

Road, attended by R——. (This gentleman was the school-porter, an old friend of mine, who will agree with me that Mercury, the conductor of ghosts, scarce drove a more sad and unwilling flock.)

"For the rest of you, all of you at least who can see how despicable these schoolboy notions and these 'thieves' honour' ways are, I call on you to remember what is at stake. I hold that we are not, as some choose to think, just like other schools. This school is being built up on the belief that if boys are treated truly, they can live as truly as men. We stand here for truth and true life. Remember, in other things other schools will be your equals and superiors: in things which are their glory, they will beat you; yes, they will beat you as far as numbers, and social reputation, and intellect-power goes. Our glory will be to show the world that in a school there can be true life. There you can be first. Win that. That is what you can do, from the oldest to the least, for the name of Uppingham. I call on you to be true to it."

These shall be thy arts, O Roman!

Did the Roman thrill at his poet's *Romane, memento*, more than some of us at our great leader's?

Were the words too proud, kind reader? I can

but tell them as they were spoken. And this, recollect, was a quarter of a century ago.

* * * * *

At twelve o'clock school was over for the morning. In a corner of the irregular school close, where now stand the chapel railings, stood a tall structure, like a barn, open on one side but for a breast-high wall. This was the fives court, on the Eton model, adapted. I was drawn thither one morning by the sight of a small concourse of spectators, and found a game of unusual brightness going forward. Three of the best players of the school and a stranger were at work with the ball. The first stroke I saw showed me the stranger knew the game, but his queer playing-gear—black trousers, and braces, the one dismounted to free the nimble right arm—puzzled me. "Who's that?" I asked. "Who's what?" replied the youth addressed. "Why, with the braces there." "Teddy, you little fool." My eyes were opened and I saw. Yes, it was Teddy, just Teddy with his coat off. But, braces or no braces, what play! Short of reach, a bit stiff and jerky in movement, but dancing about the court as if he were the shadow of the ball, always behind it at the true moment, ducking to evade, jumping to reach it, fetching it out of impossible corners, stop-

ping smart volleys into the buttress and returning them as hot as they came, then when the loose ball came, clapping it into the pepper-box dead, or (oh, rare!) pinning a helpless opponent with it against the wall. There was no such fives player then or for many a long year. His best days have never been matched. Year by year the winners of the school fives prize encountered him and one of his colleagues—a brother Etonian and kingsman, dear, true, gentle, lovable "Daddie" Witts, the tenderest soul alive, who knew not severity but in those vicious left-hand volleys of his—and year by year the school learnt who were their masters out of doors as in.

Ay! he was the prince of fives players, since the day when a big boy would have turned the small scholar out of an Eton fives court, and that small, indomitable scholar flung himself on the flags, to dispute them with his body, ejaculating "I'll die first!" whence "little Die first" became his name among Eton youth.

At half-past one he presided at our dinner in the schoolhouse. He pronounced a longish Latin grace sonorously; then from the ample withers of the Leicestershire sheep he hewed masculine portions, broad and long. So did Achilles carve for Ulysses

and Ajax. His carving was epic, but not good. But he served others as he served himself. For in diet he did not "hold opinion with Pythagoras," or perhaps with dietetic advisers nearer at hand, but lived chiefly upon flesh. Sweets he would none of. Perhaps he erred, but it was a noble error. In meats and drinks he was of the purest temperance. In this, as in all his conduct of the body, appetite had no hearing: what made for efficiency in work gave him his rule. For his was the temperance not of the ascetic, but of the soldier or the athlete. "Fasting?" I once heard him say, "why, for a man who is trying to do his work in the best way, life is a perpetual fast;" at which his robust interlocutor looked baffled. And indeed, for better digestions, the saying is less true.

Meanwhile he believed in fare being good of its kind. "It's no use having luxuries unless you have them good." He was contemptuous of weak tea; "If you have it at all, have it strong." He used to vaunt a sauce he had invented for brawn, and was enthusiastic over "Laureate mutton" dressed after a recipe authorized by Tennyson; and a house-master, commenting on the terms of his agreement, remarked that "beer for the boys of the quality supplied at the schoolhouse" (which was excellent)

was the chief article as of faith to which he had to subscribe.

With the scant interval of half an hour, we betook ourselves to the muse of numbers and geometry, and for an hour and a half, in a sweet digestive trance, solved equations or dreamily extracted roots. But on one afternoon in the week, Thursday, there was no dreaming, and digestion had no drowsy spell. That afternoon the fifth and the fourth went separately up to the headmaster, and for a bad three-quarters of an hour construed from the *De Senectute*. If many felt as some did, and have memories as good, then there are now many mature men whose hair creeps on a Thursday at three o'clock. From whispering conclaves in study doors, where *responsa prudentum* were taken from hopeful young scholars upon the lesson's most stubborn knots, we gathered to the class-room, the hall of "the Lodge" where this weekly assize was held. We took our places. A fierce fire galled one cheek; but oh! it was balm to the fire one had to face on the other side, when the gowned presence, after a moment's silent survey, said, "Construe — Jones *minor*." The lot of Jones has leapt from the urn. He rises to confront his fate, in stony dread. Parts of speech swim before him; his voice sounds hollow

to his ear, like noises to a drowning man, but he proceeds unscathed, and another construes, and another. But then, just at the point where Cato the Elder was commenting to Scipio and Laelius on the grumblings of his companions in eld, the construe is stopped: "Jones minor—*quod voluptatibus carerent*—why *carerent?*" Jones minor cannot say. Brown major is no wiser. Robinson, a boy of assurance, repeats a rule from the reigning primer: he is extinguished with a Socratic request to explain his explanation. White tries a rule from Thring's *Latin Gradual:* it would have been a capital answer last week, but this week is a section too late. Then Grey seeks to conjure with that word of all work, "indefinite." "Yaas—very much so—you!" is the sarcastic welcome. Green, a novice, falters "indirect question," unconscious that this is a "certain draw." But Green is new, and the presence restrains itself, and looks on, long-sufferingly, to the next: the lightning does not fall. Black, a recluse student, hesitates an answer from the light of nature: it passes me now to recall his suggestion, but the reply I remember, "My!—good!—fellow! do you generally stand on your heels or on your head?" And before Black has seized the relevance of the rejoinder, the question is going

down the class with a rapid "next—next—next." At the bottom Grubbe minor, much-enduring, cold-eyed Grubbe, stoically awaits developments, reflecting that "he can't lick so many as *this* for that," when Wilson minor, fresh from his father's vicarage (bless him, for an excellent little chap) lisps out an inspired something. A flash, not lightning, comes into the eyes of the presence, the deep-trenched lines of the mouth relax: "Yas, —excellent, excellent, Wilson." And then, though it immediately appears that Wilson, like many a creative artist, has uttered things deeper than he knew himself, the work is done. The gathering storm melts in a benign effusion of syntactical exposition, of which even Grubbe understands at least so much, that it spends time which would else be spent in construing. At the lesson's end the presence construes it over. Rich and strenuous his English sounds. We would be content to hear him construe the whole three-quarters of an hour. But he is harking back to *carerent* when a clock strikes, and a stern "You may go," judicially and massively spoken like a sentence of acquittal, empties the room. Whew! to breathe the blessed air again! *O refrigerium.* Purgatory over for a week! The very gravel of the quad smiles under-

foot, the green ivy laughs on the wall. What matters it to us that to-morrow is Black Friday with its crowded school hours and much Euclid? What matters anything at all? We have been up to Teddy—and here we are!

But now in front of me, as I write, lies a very slim volume, bound in thick morocco, of which I have so often seen the back; for between the covers is *Cato Major De Senectute*, and on the margin those strenuous translations are dinted with a fine, firm pencil in diamond print character. And, as I look, I murmur, "You were more terrible to little boys than you knew or meant. Perhaps had you been a little less awful, we should have learnt our Cicero even a little better. Ah! well, our thanks none the less, for you made our hearts the tougher."

* * * * *

The evening hours were spent, on full working-days, in the halls of our classmasters, which took the place of the pupil-room elsewhere; on Saturday and Sunday in our studies. At uncertain but brief intervals he would make a round of these, to keep all straight. Your door suddenly unlatched disclosed a keen face framed against the midnight: it came and vanished like a phantom, with just a

moment's pause, either for a curt official glance of inspection, or a beaming grin for two cronies licensed to hob-nob in one den. Once and again there would be a word. Two of my contemporaries who in adjacent studies were engaged in deeds without a name (one of them was frying a cock-chafer, and the other was skinning a hedgehog) remember his pregnant comment "*Bene olet qui nihil olet.*" It may be remembered that his organ of smell, though this incident might not unsupported establish the fact, was fastidious: popular perfumes displeased him: and a youth coming into school with essenced handkerchief, and suddenly rendered conspicuous by a short nasal query, which he probably remembers as well as we, didn't do it any more.

* * * * *

At evening prayers, the boys of the house only round him, he read the Psalms with us majestically, as in the morning, though often with a touch of weariness in the voice. A fibre stirred in many a young boy's heart, as in the prayers he spoke the petition interpolated in one familiar collect, "more especially for this Thy school."

THE RULER.

CHAPTER II.

THE RULER.

"AT Uppingham? Oh! yes, yes. I know. That's Dr. Thring's school, where they whip the boys so." Such was the address with which old gentlemen used to insinuate themselves into our schoolboy graces in the early sixties. Strange how it angered us. "*Dr.* Thring's school" too! However, this was better than when a little earlier the same old gentleman would have said: "Uppingham? Never heard of it. Where's that?" They knew at any rate where it was now:—it was where they whip the boys so.

Now whence came this austere fame of Uppingham? Sing, O Muse, the wrath of—— No, I will not divulge the name of heroes hidden in long musty files of the daily papers and of *Punch*. But it happened that from a brief week of Easter holiday a batch of boys returned late. They all

had excellent reasons for being late; one had stayed to a wedding, and one to see a brother off to the East, and another had missed his train. But the headmaster had furnished each with a still more excellent reason for being in time: he had promised, after long provocation, that those who came back late should be flogged. What he promised, he performed exactly. Flogged they all were, and there, one would have thought, the matter might have rested.

But it did not. Among the unfortunates were two who had not had enough, and there was a home in which their Sunday letter woke a wrathful cry, which had an echo soon in the daily prints. There arose a brief newspaper war, or at least a skirmish; the headmaster, who held in deep contempt the Press and all its works, quickly stilling the letters on his side, and we boys enjoying the fun vastly while it lasted. The complainants took little by their action, with us at least. We went solid for "Teddy." And indeed, though with a Boadicea denouncing her scourgers we have been taught to sympathise, a parent bewailing his schoolboy's stripes from the British chariot of the *Daily Telegraph* is a less moving figure. When *Punch* remarked "We don't know whether Mr. Thring

trains the boys' minds ; but he makes them mind their trains," the last word on the subject was felt to have been said.

It has been confided to the present writer in later years, that this episode was a shock to the school's rising prosperity. We suppose, therefore, it must have been so. But yet, when your chief complaint is that your school is not known at all, it is an alleviation to become known as "the school where they whip the boys so."

Such, anyhow, for worse or better, was the legend of Uppingham discipline. It was true enough for a legend. For Edward Thring was not guilty of bearing the rod in vain : he had no modern humanitarian taint in him, but was a ruler of the stout old English breed whom we are missing now in other fields than school. He smiled at the graceful writers on education, who assumed that "all schoolmasters have eyes of forty angel-power," and can shame an offender into reformation by one "gentle but piercing glance:" and on the other hand he thought the cane, compared with "lines" and detention and starving, saved time and health, and was no insupportable outrage on the personal dignity of an idle urchin. Yet at Uppingham, where they whipped the boys so, it was only a

miserable percentage of them who had a first-hand experience of the beneficent whip. Its exercise was guarded too by strict limitations. First, to protect it from abuse by temper or partiality, he retained the power of the stick in his own hands, with one or two exceptions afterwards retracted. Next, that the purity of justice might not even be breathed upon, he admitted the public. That is, at twelve o'clock, when sentence on a *cause célèbre* was in execution, one might see two ranks of fourth-form boys flattening their inhuman noses against the lattice panes of the class-room. I have heard sensitive people object to this liberty as demoralising; but the resulting deterioration of the nature of fourth-form boys is one I have been unable to trace.

However it was not to the use of the stick that Uppingham under Edward Thring owed a discipline which was perhaps unique. It owed it to two things—his system, and himself. Of systems we will not talk, for this is not an educational treatise, nor a biography, but a memory. Instead of that I will try to say how we boys found things around us. I think our experience was that it took a boy some little pains to go wrong. Our headmaster

knew how to hedge up our way with thorns, and sharp ones: but plenty of good disciplinarians could do that. He also knew how to make straight paths for our feet in true directions: an art which was his own, then, whoever has learnt it since. His laws were few; they were easy to keep; and there were plenty of things to do which were more amusing than breaking them. Schoolboy honour at that date was not nice in the point of dishonesty in lessons; but he left even schoolboy honour desperately at a loss for excuses. When a master used to set tasks which could not be done, and which might or might not be exacted, according as he happened, with a big class on his hands, to find time to exact them, the devil's advocate held a fair brief for the sins of cribbing and copying. When discipline was maintained by thundering out "Do me five hundred lines, you young rascal," and, if the rascal said "Please, sir, I can't," "Then do me a thousand for impertinence," there was nothing for it but to splice three pens together, trireme fashion, and execute the task to order, by fraudulent hectography. But as our tasks were such as we had time for, and with only twenty or twenty-five of us in a class were likely to be exacted, why should we resort to tricks

which we could well do without, and in which we were all but certain to be caught? Where would the pickpockets be if there were no crowds? And how could we hectograph our lines when no one set us lines to hectograph? Boys did cheat at times, as respected citizens have been known to forge a cheque, but there was no professional class. Just so it was with bullying. The bully just existed as a species. There were bullies, as there are rogue elephants, but they had no fraternity. The reason chiefly was that we had large elbow-room; we could get out of the bully's way, and he for his part had other occupation for his muscles. Rarer still was his congener, the "pothouse hero." Why, when "beer of the quality supplied at the schoolhouse" was so excellent, should he thirst for the hedge-tavern variety? The spice of danger no doubt might enchant the cup, but the spice was *too* pungent. There was once a headmaster of Uppingham who, entering an inn on some innocent business, was asked on leaving if he had noticed four of his pupils in the bar; but that headmaster was not Edward Thring. [It was long, long ago indeed.] So at Uppingham the pothouse hero was like the man in Aristotle, who did not like pleasure: "on the whole he did not exist." But

in fact a boy had much better things to do with his time than either to bully or to booze. There was room for all of us on our playing grounds, and the games were organized to include every one, and not only the cricket or football worthies. It is odd that this arrangement should have been an original one, but we believed it was so. For the few whom games did not catch there was the gymnasium, a carpentery, later gardens, scantily utilized, and above all *latis otia fundis*, the liberty of Rutland pastures. For bounds there were none, except the interdiction of Uppingham back-streets, and over the grass of the smooth clayey hills we might wander across country almost as we liked. Not quite. For though in that heart of the hunting country farmers were tolerant of broken fences and trampled fields, even a Rutland swain would sometimes draw the line. Among the writer's earliest reminiscences is the glowing face of a stout young agriculturist, armed with a grievous cudgel, who surprised him and another while intent upon engineering works in the channel of his brook. That we abandoned our works with nothing more than a reprimand, we owed to our new boy's *naïveté*. I recall how some friends of mine returned exceeding sore and stiff from an incidental

development of the hunting of an old ram: and, with far more emotion, how, as I crossed some fields, in the more legitimate pursuit of the fox, my elder companion, a short, but pugnacious boy, the Tydeus of my day, warned me that the lord of those fields was a dangerous person—a kind of Giant Despair, but his real name, I believe, was "Kill-dog"—and added that I need not be too much afraid, for he (Tydeus) would do something—shed his last drop of blood, I suppose it was—before he should touch me. Alas! poor Tydeus. His fighting days, and other days, are over long ago. Heaven yield him for his chivalry!

Another most powerful instrument of discipline was the extension through the school of self-government. I do not say sixth-form government, for though I should be better understood, the phrase would miss the point. In sixth-form government Edward Thring had no inventor's rights. That is linked with older names. He had, in some of his earlier years especially, a sixth-form which worshipped him as Rugby boys had worshipped Arnold, though with a less eloquent worship. Nor were they, I imagine, below the Rugby standard of effectiveness, though with cir-

cumscribed powers. To us younger boys, certainly, in the Paladins of the Sixth at Uppingham it seemed that "old Brooke" and all his peers were come again on earth. But it is common justice to admit that the wave of Arnoldism was still sweeping through English schools, and that, as it ebbed, the vigour of sixth-form institutions waned at Uppingham as elsewhere. What Thring did of his own was to make not the sixth-form responsible for the society, but the whole society responsible for itself. If anything went wrong, the first question was, Who were there? Whoever was head of anything, a house, a dormitory, a class, a ground, or, failing regular officers, whoever was senior of those present, had to answer in his own person for the sins of his section. He might be a shivering nobody, but if his name stood first on the school-list, that clothed him with responsibility. "Why did you permit this?" It is true that nature is very careless about putting at the top of a class the boy with the best set of muscles, and when a "captain" was a head shorter than his men, odd situations were created. To the plea of human weakness, however, Thring would, in theory, show an indifference which was sublime, and, it may be added, most salutary, for it helped

to turn weaklings into men. In practice, however, mercy seasoned theory, and the punishment was humanely distributed over the whole guilty section. "I don't know who the offenders are," he would say, "and I don't want to know. They would not have done it, if the rest of you disliked it enough. I hold that society can keep down any offences it disapproves of: and I mean to give you reasons for disapproving of this kind of thing." Collective punishment for an individual's sin is in harmony with the spirit of primitive legislation, and we felt sure that Old Testament reminiscences added a charm to the system in his mind. Yet it must have needed some nerve to work it. Boys accepted it, some as rational, some as fate. Outside opinion used to gird at it, stupidly and to no good result; but in spite of this grit the machine of discipline worked grandly. There were mistakes of course in application. It was sometimes turned on where public responsibility for the crime did not exist, or was not demonstrable; sometimes its crushing-hammers came down with a thump upon too small a matter of offence, and we recall a sense of disproportion between the crime and penalty, when the school had to do without its half-holidays for a period, because in our schoolroom, newly decorated

with the worthies of literature, some imp's pencil had fitted the finger of Horace with a ring. You may call that imp what you like: and we did. But as his deed of darkness was too possibly worked without competent witnesses, his companions bore his trespass not without a groan. Against doubtful instances of the system's application let me place a triumphant example of its success—the suppression of "set fights." It was a superstition that these fights supplied a felt want in schoolboy life. The sudden skirmish, fought out on the spot, perhaps does, but these deliberate affairs, mostly hatched by the friends of the fighters, and fought out before a critical crowd, long after the hot blood had cooled, in a secluded meadow, where the combatants pounded one another in a cautious and dummy-like fashion till one had had enough, satisfied no felt want except that of schoolboy bloodthirst. Many of us attended who ought to have known better: but when your dear friend's, or perhaps your brother's honour was at stake, duty seemed to beckon thither. However, one term an epidemic set in, and one of the affairs came to the knowledge of masters. Next morning the headmaster marched into school with the furrows by the mouth in deep

shadow. He described the "abomination" of a set fight in his terse eloquence, and clinched his demonstration with the following:—"Now, the next fight that takes place, I will flog both the fighters, all the seconds, and *every one who was looking on.*" We did not doubt him; we knew he had the necessary endurance. The set fight referred to is the latest known to have taken place.

But as we remarked some way back, the school owed its discipline not only to the master's system. Behind the system was the man. How did we find him? How did his personality affect our good order?

First of all, we were much afraid of him. This was well. Without denying the contention of the individual mother that her boy can only be led by kindness, the uncongenial truth is, that, for boys in their collective capacity, fear is at any rate the *beginning* of wisdom. Probably it will not be disputed that he was the most formidable schoolmaster of his age. If asked for an account of our fear, we should say that his power of inspiring it was part of his magnetism; and there is no use in describing it further than to say that, when boys saw the lines of his upper lip stiffen like iron, and

the sheet lightning begin to play in his steel gray eyes, they did not lightly provoke the discharge; and that if he broke in on a scene of misrule with his characteristic cry of "Law-breakers!" and the query "Will you obey orders?"—why, we decidedly felt we would.

But the dread of him was not only instinctive, it was a reasoned dread too. He inspired fear because he felt none, or so we thought. We believed that he would go to any length to keep his word. There was no getting to the back of his resistance to wrong-doing. Few tried to do it; for the point of such incidents as that of the Easter holiday epic, with which our chapter began, was not soon forgotten, and his prestige for thoroughness was the cheap defence of order.

But if fear is the beginning of wisdom, it is the beginning only, and as an agency in discipline is even less essential than justice. Now of his justice we no more doubted than of his terribleness. There are, however, different types of justice, as there are of courage, and what we admired in his was less its reasonableness than its righteousness. Occasionally, and in lesser matters, we thought him one-sided in his estimate of a transaction, unready to take our point of view and entertain pleas which

we believed had reason in them; severe beyond human standards in his language of condemnation; and given to bringing down the naked edge of a "principle" with unconventional austerity upon poor human conduct. But we were sure that his justice would be pure; that passion would have nothing to say in it, nor respect of persons; that offenders would have fair trial, and judgment go upon broad intelligible grounds. The boy, who, under examination on some rather grave charge, broke out with "I know I shall have justice, sir," spoke the general belief. There may have been a few mistakes with which the memory of some will tax him, but they will have been mistakes of judgment. Who can administer justice so long and not make them?

But if his severity and justice made discipline inevitable, it was another quality which commended it to us. Among the secret springs of discipline was his tenderness. His tenderness was of that pure, sound, love-compelling quality which belongs to natures of which the grain is stern. It had no alloy of emotionalness. He gave us proof of the possession of such a quality in his fondness for the company of children, or of little boys who had been children not so long ago. But

probably it was best known to a boy who, getting into some trouble, or looking as if he soon would do so, was sent for of an evening to receive what we named a "paternal." Over such intercourse a veil ought to lie. But the results were always visible. No boy but came away softened and raised. He had a power of finding where the spark of fire lay hid in the coarsest of human clay. In that art he was supreme, and he did for the common natures what no one else, we think, has done.

The secret of his art lay mainly in two powers. First he had a masculine understanding (sympathy is altogether too soft a word to use for the purpose) of the plain, simple temptations to which youthful flesh is heir. A boy, in whom the dangerous impulses were strong, felt that the warning or the counsel came from one who owned an animal nature as forcible and enjoying as his own, and who, when he spoke of the conquest of the senses, was not speaking conventionally, or of any shadowy battle. Many a career, we are sure, would have known the shipwreck of passion but for him, and there are those who will acknowledge it. "What would Thring say of it?" has often crossed a young man's path with a strength to save.

The second power was a rarer one, and a higher. It was the intensity of his feeling for the worth of a life. Of any and every life. The gifted among the young seldom fail to find those who will inspire them, and tempt forth the moral ambition. That is an easy and a genial task. But the plain, ungraced, ungifted nature, without destiny or distinction, for whom, in our inhuman phrase, "there is no future," whose mortal progress is but from a school's lower benches to a counting-house desk—was there any one who, like him, could cast a beam on this, and make it suddenly grow wonderful in its owner's eyes? A few minutes in that study's privacy, a few score words, broad and plain, and gentle without a touch of sentiment, and the heavy-witted, leaden-natured boy had looked and seen himself in an enchanted mirror. Could this be his own dull self which was imaged there, in such an outline and so glowingly? Why then, if life was like this, it was worth while trying to be good.

It is among the offices of poetry to make visible the sublime in things common. If that is so, our headmaster was a great poet, who worked in human lives for his material.

But when we touch on this imaginative power of his, we touch on something more powerful with us

than his tenderness, or his severity and his justice. He ruled us through our fear and confidence and affection, but there was a secret of rule deeper than all these, a something which commanded our awe. Let that pass at present, for we young boys could note it, but could not name.

THE TEACHER.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEACHER.

THE new boy has grown a little older, and his store of memories larger. From the vantage of a place in the sixth form he surveys a wider horizon, and what came into his view he goes on to tell.

It was now first that he knew his headmaster as a teacher. As a fourth-form boy indeed, he had, weekly, sat at his feet, and with what emotions we remember. But then he knew him rather as examiner and judge. It was otherwise now.

People who nowadays attend educational conferences remember Edward Thring as an old-fashioned stickler for the classics, who would have every one to learn Greek and do Latin verses, who thought French lessons an ancient superstition, and Science a modern idol. To be thought first a revolutionist, and last a fogey, is a thing which happens to long-lived genius. It may be admitted, however,

that with some modern schools of educational theory he did not find himself in full agreement. With what school he was in full agreement, at any period of his life, is a question to which the briefest answer is the best. We boys did not ask ourselves that kind of question about him. We very soon remarked, however, that he did not teach us as did the scribes of Latin primers and English themes, from whose feet we had come to Uppingham. We might burn our old syntaxes in the Latin tongue, for he had discovered (and even the simplest things have to be discovered by some one) that the rules of language could be stated in English. Further, he had discovered that grammar meant common sense applied to language. This faith he embodied in two or three little manuals, an English Grammar evolved long before in the dialectics he used to hold, as a Gloucestershire curate, with village school-children; a Latin Gradual, parent, we believe, of more children than own it; and a Greek Mood-Constructions. On these we were reared. We grumbled a little, even then, because our University candidates were disadvantaged by the use of a terminology which examiners would not accept as legal tender, yet we hugged a secret joy in holding a solution of the subjunctive, which not even an

examiner could understand. We had the same complex feeling about all his teaching. For the University markets, it was not the best, but, of its kind, it was grand. It was on lines unrecognized outside, and it did not cover the ground fast enough, detaining us with elaborate analysis and questioning, for an hour together, over a score of verses of Greek play, so that we went to College with much lee-way to make up. But then that score of verses! What fire he could put into them! It was not by wealth of illustration, by ingenuity of paraphrase, by subtle development of a shade of meaning, that he woke our sympathy with an author (want of time and reading made him constrained in the use of these arts), but by the sheer energy of his own sympathy, the intensity of his conception of a situation, a scene; his masculine enjoyment of a rich word, a trenchant phrase; and the consciousness we derived that his conception, right or wrong, was never at second hand. He brought out a classic's flavour by the action of heat. Naturally he was most successful with a kindred author—with Cæsar, when a good fight was on, with pungent, unsyntactical Tacitus at all times, but most of all with Æschylus, his poet of all. There he was wholly at home. The broad emotions, the colossal seriousness, the vast boulder-

like words, of the *Agamemnon* and the *Prometheus,* found in him their right interpreter. In those roomy periods his intensity could work free, and yet overstrain nothing. A better introduction to the spirit of letters could hardly be than the evening class, when, in the dim-lighted sombre schoolhouse hall, he declaimed his translation of the *Agamemnon.* It had the solemnity of a religious service.

He did more than set us a good example in translation. He made us imitate. In this he drilled us splendidly. He would take nothing but our best English. If a boy offered less he would set him on his legs to construe, and so grievously torment him, word upon word, line upon line, that it became cheaper to come well prepared. Was not this the process which trained the oratory of Burke? Had a Burke been among his pupils, the orator would have owed his master a debt.

With the converse process, translation *into* Latin and Greek, his methods had a mixed success: they did not teach us to write the very best prose and verse; they did teach us to exert our minds in attempting it. The latter is far the higher fruit of composition, and the loss of the other must not be

much grudged : it was the inconvenience, at worst, of a few scholars.

He would come into school and say, "For your elegiacs take "*To-day.*"

"Listen to this" (and he read a canto from *In Memoriam* such as, "Risest thou, thus, dim dawn again"). "There's your model. Now don't go and write me any stuff about 'the sun shines bright,' or 'snow covers the earth.' Notice what to-day is like, and what makes it different from other days. I don't want an old almanac, thank you." Off we went to gather straw for our bricks ; to find something to say, and some Latin to say it in; and it pains one to remember of what meagre straw, and doughy brick, was our weekly batch. It was what bakers call "sad." Our teacher would use even stronger epithets, on revision day, as his mighty pencil hacked its way down the exercise, till the moment came to hand it back, in the condition technically known as "a pair of breeches." That pencil ! Later it grew into that half inch of black lead, with which the carpenter rules out his planks, and a deeply erring exercise, scored by its broad strokes till the grain of the oak desk showed through, would take on the air of an incipient rubbing from a brass. The method was typified by its tool : it

was too massive. There was too much of insistance upon large principles of composition, which, however, he would illustrate to a class with much fulness, and even beauty; too little of the *axiomata media*—the details which interpret those principles to the scholar's small mind—too little of the labour of the file upon a pupil's exercise, the pliant skill which teaches how its rawness might be mitigated, and imparts new resources of diction and idiom. This was partly because his mind was like that carpenter's pencil; it had its grand qualities—and their defects; it was architectonic, but with not so good a turn for detail. Partly there was not time for it. There could not be, when to the duties of head-master, head pastor, and the organizer of a new school system, he added the entire teaching of his sixth form, with weekly inspection of the rest. It is wonderful that he covered the ground as he did. But for swiftness of work he was a Cæsar. This was one of his soldier virtues. But it betrayed him to attempt too much. Boys who thought their own genius under-prized used to grumble at the speed with which, in examination hours, sheet after sheet of their answers on certain subjects fluttered over the edge of his desk to the floor, 'one hardly to earth before the next was in air,' till the class-

room was as the cave of the Sibyl. The grumblers had little reason : this was the natural rate at which his judging machine registered results ; slowing-down would not have improved its action. It was not in examination, but in teaching, that he would have done wisely to have undertaken less. Yet even here, in this revision of exercises, though he gave himself scant time for comment, and though censure too much rejoiced against instruction, he could at times make impressions, to which his pupils have owed a method, or an inspiration. Over a copy of Greek verses 'he would say things which often lasted for life.' And if 'For your elegiacs take To-day' was to many of the class a dispiriting order, it should be remembered that it was an order which, rightly obeyed, sent us out in the fields to look about us, and exercise our senses. Admiration is due to the ingenuity of a reformer who could so refashion an antiquated educational instrument for modern uses, and convert a copy of "longs and shorts" into that practice of Observation which the scientific opponents of classical study were just then coming to insist on, and to claim as their monopoly. It may be questioned whether the system made for good Latin verse such as examiners desire : it may be questioned whether the fruit, really reaped from

the system, would not have been better gained by an exchange even of the converted instrument for another—Latin verse for English. But there is no doubt that he had invented what, for many minds, was an effective agency of culture. "Every one knows," he said in a lecture on Teaching, "the difficulty of screwing a single line out of the poor misguided Solomon, who whines out that he is not a poet, when his master only wants him not to be a fool!" It has been the doom of most of us to lie somewhere between these extremes; but those who find themselves placed the furthest from the nether pole, and the nearest to the other, owe their favourable position, largely, to taking pains with their elegiacs on To-day.

But it was in the early morning Divinity lesson that the headmaster was most himself. It was this he would have chosen to be judged by; by this he was best remembered by his sixth form boys. Yet it is difficult to describe it fitly. There never was a lesson like it before, nor will be again. His personality entered it so largely, that the nature of the lesson is as incommunicable as personality. The matter of his teaching was beyond all common praise of teaching. The manner of it, under

ordinary standards, would not be praised at all. But neither, under ordinary standards, can it be judged at all. This, however, was the way of it. We opened our books, and we read a chapter, or part of one, from the Old or New Testament. He stopped the reading, paused, and naming some one, oftenest the head boy, asked, "What great principle of life-power does this passage show us?" or "What law of the spirit world is revealed here?" It will be believed that such a query might give pause to even a head boy. There is a want of light and leading, in a question so framed. But at any rate it *is* a question. Sometimes, however, our wits had not even a question at all to work on. A story goes—mythical, of course, but genuinely illustrative—that he began one morning with "Abraham——, Smith? — Jones? — next — next?" and so passed it, with long pauses, down all the form, unanswered. No wonder. For the problem was not only to find an answer, but first to find the question: we had to make known *both* the dream and the interpretation thereof; a task for prophets, not for schoolboys. No doubt there were clues; there was a reference to a back lesson, else none of us could have answered such questions, and some did. But it is better frankly to admit, that this was

not a good way of questioning a class. It had, for result, that answers came from the very few. If a boy possessed at once a capable mind, some practice in the method, and a good will, he became an adept. If he had not these things, he was apt to be resignedly silent, and questions which had passed the top of the form would make a weary, inevitable progress, unarrested, to the bottom. Hence the honour accorded in the sixth to a schoolfellow who could "stop a question." I can still recall the dismay, with which we faced the prospect of the Divinity lesson, when our protagonist was away, engaged in winning the Balliol. As a fact, nothing wholesomer for us could have happened. We screwed ourselves up, and came prepared, rank and file, for a soldier's battle. The first question asked, our deuteragonist, mustering all his resources, and delivering himself of he knew not what, answered with such effect ("Very good, a *very* good answer; I didn't think you would have seen that") as to be scared by his own success. Spent with his effort, he found himself supported staunchly by the reserves in all sections of the form, and a halcyon week followed, in which our master's ideal of a dialectic between teacher and taught came nigh to being realized. But things were not always so

happy. Often no response could be drawn, from one wing of the class to the other, and, overcome by the hardness of our hearts, he would indignantly close his Bible, and with a "Take your Thucydides, then," turn us in disgrace to our Greek particles, which at least are not sacred ground.

"That is not good teaching," will be the professional comment. Well, no. It is a teacher's art to make answer possible: to use accommodations, to deal out truth in morsels as it can be swallowed; not, like a child at a nursery window, toss a whole crust at a sparrow. No, the method was faulty. Only there is no lesson we learnt, at school or elsewhere, which we would not cheerfully give up, to keep this one. Nor was the method without a certain unique merit of its own. It was a drastic pressure of his will upon our minds. His cogent interrogation applied to our intellect *non lene tormentum*, it put it on the rack, forced us to *intend* our mind, to labour and travail with ideas, to grapple with his thought, as in a night-wrestle in some "dim tract of Penuel." Technically, that may not be good teaching, but it is powerful discipline, and such we believed it to be. It was indeed a current saying among us, that "Thring's divinity makes you write good essays in scholarship exam-

inations." For the implied fact we will not vouch. Probably the candidates who wrote their Latin verse badly compensated themselves by the assumption that they had written their English prose well, just as armies have been known to console themselves for inferior tactics and armament, by vaunting their superior address with the bayonet. But as pupils' testimony to their teacher, the vanity is worth citing.

And then, when the wrestling-bout had ended in victory, or had lasted long enough, he would deliver his own thoughts. What thoughts, who of his hearers does not remember? One time, in a lesson on the Pentateuch, he would stretch a broad canvas, as it were, and strike upon it, in few, deep, rugged, vital touches, an outline of one of its large-limbed heroes. Living portraits they were, alive with his own personality. An Abraham, coming out from his own people, a Moses "heir-apparent to the greatest throne in the world," a Phinehas, ruthless against abomination—we seemed to know them at last, for there was a secret energy in the delineation, which we felt to be that of a teacher, who knew for himself what a venture of faith was, and what ambition, and what moral indignation.

Another time, he would rouse our fancy with

some touch of mysticism, not without quaintness; speculations on the philosophy of names, of dreams; on the moral relations of animal life to man or the Creator; imaginations as to the action of spiritual influences on physical things; as to the organization of "a true world," and so forth.

Or he would lay down some large ground plan of world history, and fit it with illustration; and some of us will remember a secret rapture of enlargement, as the walls of the universe were rolled back, and our landscape widened into spacious prospects, while he spoke of prophecy, and fulfilment, and the fulness of time; of the dooms of races, the secrets of the rise of empires, of lost nations, or nations dying of an inward hurt through centuries of seeming splendour.

Or again we would feel the ring of some personal and present experience, when he spoke of the hatred of the world for good, the loneliness of good, of the mischief worked to a cause by half-hearted friends, "worse than open foes," the uselessness as witnesses to a truth of any but its friends and followers, or the duty of not attacking honest work, however much one might think it mistaken.

Or last, he would sow in our minds some truths

of the moral life, set in a pregnant aphorism. "Those who think punishment cannot be eternal suppose that sin is not a part of man's life." "Either we must believe that Christ is truth, or that all light and truth have sprung out of falsehood." "Christ's true martyrs do not die, but live." "The best of life, both in sorrow and joy, is solitary;" growing most impressive of all, perhaps, when, on the suggestion of some character type in the Old Testament, an Esau or a Reuben, he turned the light of his parable full upon a folly or a vice of school. Among my own memories of these times the earliest and the most moving, though I was too young and ignorant to understand, is that of the stern, yet pleading tones in which he gave his warning against youthful sins of the flesh, and spoke, in the thrilled silence of his listeners, of the shamed and fallen, who "sink into unhonoured graves."

How the poetry of that cadence dwells in my mind! Often I have thought that of more value to us than the positive knowledge imparted, was the emotional emphasis, with which he invested what we had not yet grasped as knowledge. The emotion was stored in the mind as a blank form, a vacant mould to be filled, later, with the matter of

the thought. For an instance: speaking one day of the belief in a future life, he tried to get from us one of its scriptural warrants. Not succeeding, he recited, with a sudden great glow of feeling, the words from the Gospel: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." For a boy's intelligence the point still needed some expansion or comment. He gave none, or we did not understand it: the act of quotation was all that remained with me. But the outflash of his spirit did not die with the moment; it clung, like a golden cloud, to the embryo thought, one day to light it up. Unconsciously, he was following the true order of the higher teaching, making the passion for truth prepare the way for its possession.

A great teacher? Have it as you will. He taught great things, and he taught them greatly. They were sometimes obscurely said. Still oftener they lay in the mind barren, to ripen later with experience. He believed himself a sower of seeds, and so he was. He also thought himself a skilled wielder of dialectic, and here I think he on the whole erred. He conceived of his divinity lesson

as a dialogue of which he was the Socrates. The Greek analogue might have been chosen better. It was an initiation; a mystery of which he was the priest.

THE HERO AS SCHOOLMASTER.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HERO AS SCHOOLMASTER.

No headmaster, with one famous exception (if it be one), has been so beloved by his boys as Edward Thring. But the love inspired by an individuality so separate as his, was also a very separate thing, and requires to be characterized. It is not easy to do this, but we will try.

To begin with, the qualities which most immediately win affection were not his, in person and in manner. There was little of what is called charm. Face and figure expressed a hardness and sharpness of corners, which his manner did not belie. He was genial, warmly and sincerely genial, but there was a want of elasticity in his play. He was humorous too, sometimes most trenchantly, but it was a humour which wanted suppleness in the give and take of intercourse, and acted best *in vacuo.* Altogether, in his sociality there was too

much force for general pleasantness. It was by no superficial quality that he won us. Our affection began, I think, in admiration of his manhood. But here too there was nothing to impose on our minds. You had to look twice to see the significance of his presence. But then you found the short stature gave no impression of smallness, rather some idea of mass: all was so closely knit, and of such tempered steel; you thought of some type of Roman conqueror, short, square, untireable, always in hard fighting condition. Then he had those credentials of manhood which boys understand easiest: he had been an athlete, in some ways was one still. We knew that at college, where he was too short of limb for distinction as an oar, he had been a great runner, long before the days of "athletic" sports. He was given to racing any one who would take him, as we learnt from many stories of his over a breakfast table, of which I have forgotten all except that of a long-legged Scot, carrying a small hand-bag, with whom he raced for the one bed vacant at an inn: he admitted to the Scot beating him, by the length of that hand-bag. Then, not to speak again of his fives, where none of us could touch him, he was known for the severity of his "charge" in the foot-

ball field ; and long after, when that game was no longer worth his bones, for his tortuous swift "underhand," a bowling so old that it was new, and very fatal to good wickets. I recall too how once his bat pulled our lost house match out of the fire, in defiance of the school's slow bowler. The batting style was all his own, and the Powers of cricket stood aghast at it. But there, as always, it was the *fortiter in re* which marked him. For that slow bowler might place his twisters where he liked ; it was all one ; off they went, punctually, every ball of them, to long on for three. Such an eye he had : it dispensed him from rules of "form."

This was a kind of vigour we could all understand. But, indeed, we did not need the sight of his energy at play to interpret to us his energy at work. Energy seemed to us the very soul of him. It breathed from him in gesture and glance, in his words, and in his silence. There was so much of it, that many people, as we fancied, could see nothing else for the energy. We could see much else, but in our eyes, too, he was first and above all the *man*, the man among men for us. We looked up at him, when he was in a mood of sternness or enthusiasm, and thought, What a soldier you would have made! How you would have ordered a

charge, and led it! or, How you would have made your men stick to their guns at a pinch! As it was, he had only to fight with——well, well, whoever it was, we were sure they had no chance against him, and rather wondered they could give him so much trouble. As children think of their parents, we fancied all things possible for him.

But next and far more, we loved him as a leader. He had a cause, and he took us into it. There was a work to be done in Uppingham, which had not yet been done in England, a school life to be built up, which would be a new thing under the sun, a discovery of what boys could be and do. That was his cause, and we were to be his helpers. Will the reader smile at the vanity or simplicity of boyish thoughts? People smiled in those days; justly enough before verification. What had boys to do with educational causes? Let them get educated. Well, so we did, and all the better for the cause. Be that as it may, it is not my concern to say what our thoughts were worth, but only what they were. And they were what I describe them. So we loved him as a leader. He won us not by grosser things, but by the offer of adventure; for it is true of boys, spite of a familiar prejudice, as of men, that you buy them best, not by giving

them something to eat, but by giving them something to do. And certainly here was something to do, which was among things honourable but hard. It was not an easy adventure he proposed, to win a place for this obscure grammar school, not only beside the great established schools of the country, but, in a sense, above them. But we looked at him, and believed it would be done. The small respect which the rising Uppingham got from the public, our friends often among them, only pricked us like a spur. The contrast between the slender visible power of the place, and our dreams of it, between what we were and what we meant to be, gave the enterprise a final touch of romance. When he spoke to us, in his emphatic tones, of a greatness to be achieved, for which we too could work and live, I think he laid upon our spirits the spell of a loyalty which belonged to other times. Doubtless boys make romances too readily. Yet there was something in him, in his accent, his mood, his turns of language, his military metaphors, his "simple words of great authority," so unmodern, and so expressive of the strong elemental feelings and the ideals of a chivalrous age, that if I must find a name for the bond between us and him I must go to that age to borrow it. We felt our

bond to be, as it were, a silent vow of knighthood. It was a silent vow, not only because boys are reticent, but because he himself, with all his warm imaginativeness, kept sentiment under the healthiest, most masculine control, and, in the affections, preferred a dry light. That was, in part, the reason why, between him and the pupils who were nearest to him, the intimacy, except at critical moments, was not very considerable, nor conspicuous to others, but, in proportion to his personal influence on them, was even slight. Confidences he did not like, for reasons we could not understand then. In the conduct of our sixth form responsibilities, he gave scanty direction or encouragement, although, under a system which put a burden of government, sometimes, on young boys without physical strength or practical power, such help was needed. This need he seemed to disregard, perhaps from lack of the precise experience in his own school days, perhaps because the effort of levelling up the mass of boys to a sense of common responsibility, led him to make less of the sixth form. If, however, anything was wanted here, what he did was more valuable than what he left undone. Always stronger in the scope than in the details of action, he taught us, if not the best way to perform

a duty, at least the necessity of performing it. Our encouragement in difficulty was the conviction, "It has got to be done." It was the best. After all, the first thing with young soldiers is to teach them they must go under fire.

And still the thing which drew us most has not been told. It was, that we believed him to be a hero. We thought so then, and with the fear before our eyes of the public disrespect for immature hero-worship, we yet mean to avow it. Ours is, at least by now, a well-seasoned worship, which has stood the solvents of time, intimacy, and comparison. But, again, my task is not to justify our boyish belief, only to assert it, and explain how it came to us. The first thing we should have said of him was, that he was unlike all other people whom we knew. It might be said, no doubt, that we did not know many people. Still there were, even for us, opportunities of measuring him against considerable persons, on great school occasions. Without saying whether or no we thought him the greater man, at least we thought there was no common measure. We saw men more famous, more eloquent, more dignified in rank, but he always stood off from them, and grouped with no one. When others spoke, we admired or we enjoyed them. But when

it was his turn, something odd seemed to happen. He was an actor on the same stage with them, but, at his first word, it was as if the scenery shifted, and his was a figure seen in a lengthened perspective, with a voice pitched for wide spaces. Call it illusion, but you have not done with it so. What was it made the air vibrate differently under his voice? Why did we say to ourselves, "No one speaks like him"?

This, however, was now and then, on a high day. But he was as unlike others, though not so impressively, in lesser things. He had his own way of doing everything, and that with no trace of affectation in it, but as if he could not help himself. How he taught us in school, not at all as did the scribes of the Latin primer, has been seen. It was the same out of school. He would insist on some of us small boys learning to bat in his own style, planted on the wrong foot; not felicitously, for we could not draw the bow of Ulysses. He had his theory of football tactics, and not a sound one; but he imposed it on us as the best possible, until defeat in foreign matches disenchanted us. On the other hand he framed in his mellowing years a code of his own for croquet, which made that intolerable game quite a possible

amusement. At another time he took a ramble into glyptic art, and we watched him, with an astonishment not yet exhausted, produce, without instruction or practice, a set of family portraits, carved on the wood panels of a casket, and decidedly like the originals. But this, he said, was too engrossing a pastime, and thereupon *patriæ cecidere manus*, he dropped the chisel for good. Last, at least in my memories of these times, he invented a smoke-consuming fire-grate, patented it, and warmed his study with it: an earthenware egg-shell of a thing, swinging on a pivot. To a friend he wrote news of it, with "seventeen good reasons to prove that it was the best fire-grate in the world." Still I can see him pointing the poker at it, while he drops a malediction on the idiotic patent laws of Great Britain, and another on the asinine smith, who spoilt the contrivance just because he would not obey orders.

These are the triflings of originality at leisure, noticed only because they, too, were features in his unique moral physiognomy. We should have thought them mere oddities, if they had stood alone, if there had not also been, meeting us at every turn in the grave matters of conduct, stimulating, piquing, provoking, baffling, surprising,

awing us, the same paradox in every view and mental attitude. Say you had committed what you thought a venial trespass, one which many men would have treated in the "boys will be boys" style: you found that, instead of that, you had struck your head against one of the eternal verities, that you had stumbled unaware, and bruised yourself, against the great altar of justice. Or sympathy had been shown, under the code of honour common with schoolboys, with some offender, as when his friends subscribed the railway ticket for a silly fellow who ran away: they found that their crime was conspiracy, rebellion, and high treason. Or, desiring to palliate the delinquency of a schoolfellow, you offered an excuse current anywhere else: it would be returned as base coin, or nailed in ignominy to the counter: "You think I ought to pardon X— because he has borne such a good character: now that is just the reason why I have got to punish him, to show that no good character can excuse the breach of law." These were hard sayings, but we generally came to hear them, not gladly perhaps, but acquiescingly.

But the difference from other people which we recognized in him was of degree as well as of kind. The note with which he set a chord vibrating in us,

was the note of moral intensity. He treated everything, we should have said, as if it mattered supremely. He invested with a stern sort of dignity, what to others were childish things, and made us feel manhood's interests in the playground or schoolroom ; he saw a cause being lost or won in small points of conduct. The landscape of life, as he painted it in speech or sermon, grew to our eyes broader and more majestic; the lights were heightened and the shadows more black ; there were mystic distances, "invested with purpureal gleams." This was not done by rhetoric. His language, if in a true sense eloquent, was yet too unstudied, too vague and broad, and never used art to remedy monotony. What worked the spell was the moral timbre in the utterance. No iteration of his favourite themes seemed to rob his speech of its tone. When his large generalities of "life-power," "truth," "true life," came round again for the thousandth time, and a boy had learned to mimic them freely, he would be moved by them still, unless he were of the graceless. There was repetition and monotony, but it was like the monotony of a strong fountain jet: our sense of the persistent living emotion underneath, which kept

pulsing up the same forms, made the last fresh as the first. "Life, life," was eternally on his lips. No matter: for we knew there was tenfold more life in his heart than ever came to his lips.

And still we could see in him more authentic signs of the heroic than either originality or intensity. With these there was also the hero's unworldliness. That this was so came to us in part from the facts of his life. We knew that on his venture he had risked his fortunes, in money and in reputation: that he had also risked, and something more than risked, the sympathy of friends. And further we could see that in that venture his aim was a pure one. He had set out to make a little state into a great one—but not for the sake of the greatness. That kind of ambition he was always rebuking. Numbers, buildings, resources, honours, social prestige, these were nothing. The last perhaps was hardly a thing to be won by taking thought: but we saw him as one indifferent to it: "I will not emulate the fashionable schools." Honours he had no special art for winning, but he could have won many more and helped his general scheme by doing so, if he would have used conventional methods: these he declined for reasons of "truth in

education," or, as people preferred to say, "for his crotchets." To a boy going up for a scholarship his word always was, "Never mind whether you win or lose; in one sense I don't care: it will not alter my judgment of your work." Numbers he won, and quickly: but he always said he would stop when he should have reached the complement of "a true school," and he was as good as his word. Buildings too he got, and he was deeply proud of them for their beauty and the stamp of sincerity in their massive construction and thorough workmanship; specially proud of the architect's answer to his thanks, "You let me build a good wall, Mr. Thring." But the thought they oftenest prompted in him was one of those hard sayings with which great masters daunt their followers, and used to thrill us ominously: "They are noble homes for a noble life; but it the life goes out of them they will perish, and better they should fall into ruin than still endure to house a falsehood."

Taught by the author of it to think of his work in this way, it was galling to us to hear him praised by outsiders invariably for the wrong thing—for having made a big school, for having made of Uppingham (save the mark!) quite a public school. With a stranger, one always knew these compli-

ments, smoother than butter, were coming, and got on one's armour and fingered the hilt in readiness. Why, where was the glory of numbers when your contention was that it was the fault of the great schools that their numbers were too large? And what did it matter that Uppingham grew big instead of remaining small? His work was not for Uppingham, but for England. It was the conquest of a cause, the verification of a truth in the organization of schools, the discovery of a new order destined to prevail and endure. That was what we were proud of. It was for this our hearts were moved towards our great master, not for the poor success, which a vulgar man might win, of exploiting a midland grammar school.

It is customary to say that as evidence of character it is deeds which go furthest. In controversy over a character that is true. But to us, more impressive than his schemes or his actions, which, if they proved unselfishness, might have proved only the unselfishness of difficult self-conquest, was our consciousness that his unworldliness was of the spontaneous and native order. He appeared to have a genius for being unworldly. What in many good men comes by effort and bears upon it the tool-mark of self-discipline or the stamp of imitated

models, seemed in him to be the inborn temper: not an acquired virtue, but a formative principle which moulded acquirements. As imaginative faculty shapes one man, and logical faculty another, so unworldliness shaped him. It is idle to ask how we knew that. We could as easily tell why such a tone of voice is kind, and such a one is false; and just as little could we be deceived: it was an intuition. When he talked, even though the subject were on the beaten way, his judgment sounded like the application to life of eternal canons of conduct, but he spoke not as if he were consciously quoting them, but as if they were the primal mould which inevitably shaped his thought. When he preached, it was, I think, less the strenuous things he said which affected us, than the strange affinity we discerned between the utterance and the thing uttered. The sermon was the true organ of his thought. Whatever of strain or over emphasis might be noted elsewhere, all this fell into true rhythm and proportion when the occasion was high enough. It seemed as if the touch of supra-sensual things, the breath of religious mystery, was needed to make this instrument yield its own music: then the music came, strong and perfect. There was no art, no dexterity of phrase or of articulation: he "only spoke right

on," with rarely a movement except to turn the leaves: there was only the firm-outlined figure, energetic in stillness: the voice charged with steady passion, *nec mortale sonans;* the eye which wonderfully took fire with the voice, and, without grace of feature, lit up the stern face into beauty: only a man of faith, speaking of things he knew.

And there was the secret. This was his spell upon us. The magnet which drew to him the steel of young hearts was the spiritual genius of a man of faith. We saw in him a hero's consecrating mission, a hero's travail of belief. That sealed us his.

The king will follow Christ, and we the king,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.

AN INTERLUDE.

* * * * *

Hail! home of our spirits, dear hearth, where the fire, the undying, had birth,
Which we bear from the motherland altar on sundering pathways of earth,
One ember each son in his bosom: it fails not who faileth not it,
And there burns on his far away altar the flame of his boyhood relit;
Pure flame of a worship remembered, a faith with his seasons upgrown,
Truth kindled from lips of another, blown bright by a passion his own.
And ever about him brave words of the foretime as oracles ring,
Sooth speakers, live words of the live heart that bred them, the lips that gave wing—
"Not the praise, not the prize, be thy guerdon, O son, not the pride of the strife,
But to render the fruit of thy soul to the sower, the life for the life."

So ring they, true omens that fail not, betray not, sure pilots of doom,
Many-winged on earth's ways that are many: and one in the pent city gloom,
In the labour-smoke rolling, the whirl, the uproar of the labour vexed air,
Hears their echo outsounding the clamour, and knows to endure and to dare,
Helping men, as man helped him of old: and another in isles over sea,
Planting England afar and the manhood of England in kingdoms to be,
Sees the mute endless pasture no longer, but sees, through the mist of his eyes,
Faint, faint, the green ivy, grey walls, and the threshold familiar arise:
And one on wild hills by the camp fire remembers, as silently grow
The stern iron hours that bring nearer the morning, bring nearer the foe;
When a name of thy names shall shine upward, clear flame in the fierce battle breath,
Or a life of thy nursing drop earthward, thee honouring, O mother, in death.

* * * * * *

From "*Under Two Queens*," 1884.

AN INTERLUDE.

HOME and school are, in the boy's mind, mutually exclusive terms. Yet, in modern England, school is coming to perform one of the functions of home. For Englishmen all the world is home, and, in revenge it has come about that home in England, home as a place which is the centre of a permanent family life, is ceasing, except for the landed class, to exist. The fibres of local affection seek a new hold, and some of them have found new roots in the public school. Why not? The school for most boys is a more beautiful place than home: it has more antiquity than the suburban villa, more poetry than the number in the street. Still better, it is commonly the true fountain-head of the practical life; it has witnessed the first strong setting in of the drift of character, and been the confidant of the boyish vow. But, further, this home has

permanence. Except for catastrophes or decays, against which no kind of home is ensured, it is not liable to effacement, by the succession to it of strangers, like the house abandoned for a more fashionable street, or the vicarage ceded on a death. This nest is not empty when the brood is flown: the new broods claim family continuity with the old, and are rivals in natural piety.

In the rather modern sentiment for "the old school," this sense of its permanence, as a centre for a continuous common life, is surely a main constituent. Especially must that be so in the case of the few historic schools, homes of ancient wealth, as Greeks would call them, in tradition and social prestige, which seem to be nationally guaranteed against disaster, whatever their rulers for the moment may be. Such a foundation has, to the imagination of its children, a presiding genius, an Alma Mater, a fair and immortal figure, who makes all generations one. For old Uppinghamians, from whose point of view it now falls to write, this was hardly so. Our school had not lived long enough to be assured of living longer. Its title to be the undefinable thing called a public school was somewhat raw. It had a past, but not one which yielded any inference. Its origin was

Elizabethan, and not less dignified than that of Elizabethan schools of greater public note ; but to assert our continuity with our past was a little embarrassing. The people who were surprised to learn that there had been an Archdeacon Johnson's Uppingham before Edward Thring's, were far less irritating than more knowing neighbours, who remarked how much better the school got on under the present headmaster. The place to which our pride adhered was the creation of Edward Thring, its past was an honourable accident, which we liked to claim, but could not without an explanation. So our imagination did not make an abstraction and personify the school as a genius, immortal and feminine. Its genius was something mortal, and wholly masculine, and beside him there was no room as yet for an Alma Mater. *L'école c'est lui !*

And yet how to tell with what more than motherly attractiveness the school-home drew our hearts back to it, from college or colony, or fields of working life? There lived the man who had grafted on our spirits a parentage of his own, and who did not forget his paternity, but was ready "having once become the father of children, to labour on with them to the end." For the great majority of those who owned it, the tie was, of necessity, a

silent one, only here and there confessed to, often in the unlikeliest quarters. But those were many with whom the bond was constantly claimed. Next to our parents after the flesh, with whom should we rather communicate life's early events than with him ; to whom rather send the letter, to announce a success, or a disappointment, to ask for a blessing on an enterprise, or for advice when one stood at the doubtful cross-roads ? No advice like his. Yet it was not always of the kind which askers like. It was for that purpose, one might say, too oracular, though in the best manner of the Delphian response, and without its ambiguity. It had the oracle's depth of tone, aloofness from concrete fact, and the spaciousness which fits hexameter verse. If indeed you wanted a counsellor, who would accept the data of a reasonable amount of worldly policy or ambition, and frame upon these an expedient for getting the most practical advantage, with the minimum of sacrifice to principle, he was not the counsellor for you. Yet he was a deeply practical one, if the issue were fairly broad. His solutions came from a point of view as elevated as if he had been an ascetic visionary, but did not carry that sense of unattainableness and want of a common measure, which is present when visionaries counsel

mortals upon practical courses. He measured, it is true, with the angel's measuring rod, but it was in honest human yards and feet. You felt, while he spoke of first principles, that his insistance on their efficacy in actual life was not merely as of faith, but that he had the statesmanly power of divining the drift of earthly circumstance, and that his advice would not leave you in a backwater or on a sandbank. However, it was not often, I think, except in lesser matters, that he urged a course on an inquirer: himself so prompt in resolve, so definite, so confident that he had chosen the one possible alternative, he was chary in the extreme of pressing his own solution upon another man's problem. "Now this opportunity may be a great call for you, or it may be a great temptation: only you can find out; I may know what you ought to do, but I must not tell you." That is not a pleasant and easy attitude in which to leave the doubter. But it helped unspeakably. He had not said which was the path, but he had turned upon the cross roads a lens of severe light. He had not dropped the hint which makes choice easy, but he had put the iron into the blood which makes resolve possible. To wise doubters, next in value to the still small voice of their own inward discernment, is such a

trumpet voice as he would sound, in one of his large maxims. It sounded as from far away: it gave, as to details, an uncertain sound; but who did not prepare himself for battle?

But I have digressed. What I set out to do was to note a distinction of our Uppinghamian sentiment for the scenes of school, that it was, really, an attachment to a personality. Yet, by a tender transference, we gave our hearts to the stone and timber of Uppingham, as if they had won it for themselves; all was the work of his hands, and warm with his passion. The feeling overflowed to the green fields, and the long low hills, of a country side, which nature had ruled out with her ploughshare in a somewhat uninspired and methodical mood. There was glamour abroad. "A light that never was" on the pleasant, prosaic landscape, was breathed over it from our thought of him. To come back there, as an Old Boy on a sunny August festival, was like the Rhymer's recall to faëry. Do any of my readers retain the memories of a schoolboy, in his first term, told that he may go home tomorrow for an unexpected holiday:—the riot, the Bacchanalian tumult in his breast, the bubbles of joy which made his heart too big for his ribs, the dreamland haze in which all things swam. Well,

it is not a likely story, but I avow it ; the nearest thing to that mystic rapture was the feeling of an Old Boy, on his way back to school. Yet it was not the place, but the man, we came back to. 'Auld lang syne' is a great magician. Yes, but in his potion there are dregs of melancholy. There was none here. In our charmed circle, it was a vitalising joy which touched us, not to soothe, but to renerve.

This mid-August holiday, or Old Boys' match, was the high feast of cricket. All day you played cricket, or else lounged round the game, meeting old friends, and patronizing young ones. At night there was a mighty supper, laid all the length of the big schoolroom. There were cricket speeches, and cricket jokes, not as first-rate as the cricket, but they served. *O dura messorum ilia !* But then there was also a speech from the head of the table. It was like the sound of a church bell over the rustic music of a fair. It "tolled us back" to all the best days we had known. Not one word can I distinctly recall of anything said there. But there would be, first, the hearty man's welcome of us to a good holiday, good cricket, and good fare ; then talk of the year's doings, the corners turned in the school's development at home, successes and recog-

nitions abroad; then, in a rising tone, there would be words about the brotherhood of Uppingham, multiplying now, and spreading its members through the world; about the cause of manhood and true work, for which we stood, past and present Uppingham together; or, it might be, some strong and moving word of sorrow, like a leader's tribute to a brave soldier, over some one who had dropped from the ranks in honourable death.

We, who sat at table with him, were fresh from the scenes of early manhood, and these are apt to dwindle the most magnificent scenery of boyhood. But, as we listened, there were spells in the air, which could have made "a sheeling seem a palace large." It was our own raw ambitions which were dwindled by the comparison; it was here, not abroad, that interests seemed most real; here was the most vivid cause, it was here the heart of the world beat strongest. There was glamour in it, but was there delusion?

PART II.

AGAIN THE MASTER.

FIGHTING THE SHIP.

Δῶρα θεῶν.

When the high gods gave to the king of old,
They gave with unsparing hand
Wealth in garner and store untold,
Flocks on the mountain, fold on fold,
And the web of the rare sea-purple rolled
To flame at the foot of the throne of gold,
Where the chiefs of the people stand;
They gave him the strength of the fenced town,
Hosts, and captains of wide renown,
And might to beat his foemen down
When battle lay on the land.

* * *

So the old gods gave to the men of yore:
How giveth our God to-day?
Sorrow he gives, and pain, good store,
Toils to bear for the neck that bore,
For duties rendered a duty more,
And lessons spelled in the painful lore
Of a war that is waged alway:
Peril in field, and trouble in hall,
The leaguer hemming the guarded wall,
Foes arisen for foes that fall!
So giveth our God to-day.

But well with whom the high God denies
The gift of a craved release.
For so he trusts to a new emprise,
The tempered spirit, the clearer eyes,
The might which the years increase.
Till, beyond the dark and the thronging fears,
The dim veil lightens, the vision nears,
And a breath of the triumph chant is blown
From the heart of the splendour about the throne
Where the just God sits, who shall give His own
After the battle, peace.

Nov. 29, 187—.

CHAPTER I.

FIGHTING THE SHIP.

THE interval which my last chapter represents, with almost the brevity of a symbol, was the interval of six years which separated my boyish from my later memories. In explanation of my claim to resume the narrative with fulness, it is enough to say that in the early summer of 1873 I went to Uppingham on my way to another field of work, through an invitation from Edward Thring to render him some temporary assistance during a period of pressure; and that the companionship in work proved destined to last till his work ended.

The six years had worked their due measure of change upon the school. They had been prosperous years. The school had reached its limit and tended to overflow. Since the day when a

new boy's eyes remarked the want of presence in his "big school," five or six fine boarding-houses, standing in wide and pleasant grounds upon the outskirts of the place, and the group of chapel and schoolrooms in the centre of it, had transformed the insignificance of the little market town. This growth might, at this period, have been even increased, for the reputation of the school was well established, and, in those thriving days of English commerce, boys flowed in plentifully. To sounder causes of popularity was added a sudden athletic glory. Under skilful training, a generation of young cricketers had been raised, who, on their own wicket, could make havoc of the best bowling brought against them. A success of this kind chains victory to the standard. *Hac arte Pollux.* The heights of glory had been scaled.

Yet all was not so well. Prosperity is the trial time of ideals, and it was so for ours. The boys of this period were, I think, less possessed with the pride in the school's distinctiveness than their predecessors or their successors. The spirit of conventionalism was abroad: they wanted to be "like all the nations," and follow the fashion of all the public schools. The discipline was less perfect.

It was not bad, for bad discipline and Edward Thring could not exist in one place together, but it was lower. There were causes, which may be noticed presently, for this, as well as for the somewhat lowered morality, which has to be admitted. Along with this relaxation of the school's character, went some dilution too of the headmaster's personal magnetism. The golden youth of this day, who could tell you how things were done at all the big schools, were critical of "notions," and "ideas," which barred out modern improvements, and prevented assimilation. The struggles of the past they did not know, as we had known them, and therefore accepted their present fruits as the necessary order of things, for which gratitude was not due. "Specs I growed" was the mental attitude which they shared with another naïve intelligence, towards institutions as they found them. Shall we blame them? When you are a big school and can beat a stiff Marylebone eleven with good bowling, in an innings, with a hundred runs to spare, need you remember so well who made you? The subject of these changed regards was not unconscious of them, for he had a keen sense of such phases in boys' minds. As usual, he quoted the Old Testament, and reminded me

how, once, there arose up a new king, which knew not Joseph.

The fancy that the maker of Uppingham had become less indispensable, was not only among our youth. Some of their elders, too, began to think that his work had culminated, and that his retirement, which ill health seemed to render a likely event, and which he himself appeared to anticipate, would not be without public advantage, in view of the crisis through which the school was passing. For these were the days of the Endowed Schools Commission, and Uppingham now stood at its bar. A new scheme for the government of the school was being prepared by the commissioners, quickening through the Uppingham circle hopes and fears, and latent antagonisms of professional view. There were some who thought a fresh hand would steer a safer, and certainly a more comfortable course, through the breakers of an era of change. This, like other errors, was human, for who could foresee, two years ahead, the storm in which the old pilot's hand would be the only one for us? Yet here we touch a crowd of susceptibilities. He who writes recent history treads, as the poet warns us, over fires that lurk beneath the treacherous ashes. But, come,

this crust has been cooling sixteen years: it should be thick enough by now to bear a light tread. Let us try.

The elements of this difference were inherent in the circumstances of his work. His colleagues were, for the most part, not salaried assistants, but men who had invested money in his venture, by building boarding-houses, and by large contributions to the school plant. The venture had proved a sound one, though not one which yielded such profits as were being made by the holders of boarding-houses in numerous large schools. This was due to the conditions imposed from the first, and rigorously maintained, especially to the restrictions on the number of boys in a house and class. Under those conditions, Uppingham masters could not be a wealthy folk; but neither could they complain, for these were written in the bond. But, when Government interference loomed upon this scene of private enterprises, and threatened a reconstruction of it, with a possible revision of old contracts, it was inevitable that family men should look to their position, and wish to have their hearing on questions which touched their fortunes, and also (it would be ungenerous to forget this) the fortune of the school which some of them had

helped to build. Hardly less inevitable was it that they should, on some points, prefer another solution than that of their chief. That they should seek to gain the victory of their own solution was a course which, quite apart from legitimate personal interests, if any were involved, seemed recommended to them by loyalty to the school, even if it involved collision of judgment with its head. The latter had been the author of the school, no doubt: but if his nerve and judgment were giving way in a crisis, or if he were wedded to obsolete ideas, which could not survive in the new age,—what then? Must they let the captain run the good ship upon a shoal? Did loyalty to him demand suicide?

Here was a pretty conflict of principles; here were the moral materials for tragedy—if boarding-houses, and school fees, and Royal Commissions be not elements incongruous with the tragic. One who knows the story well, thinks that tragedy there was.

At any rate the hero of it (for we need not decide between the principles to know who this was) had much to suffer. Worn down with work, plagued with a delicacy of health which, though it never tamed his nervous energy, was a constant misery, he had to face an external danger which

threatened to invade and overthrow his twenty years' work, and to face it almost alone, or with men, who, if they followed, followed him trembling.

Shade of the Endowed Schools Commission, listen in your tranquil metempsychosis, with unwounded ear, to what we thought of you when this was your name among men, and you took in hand to amend Uppingham.

Archdeacon Johnson, who in 1584 built and endowed the "faire, free grammar school of Uppingham," was a good man, large in mind and large of hand, and he had done a good deed in his own generation, which had led to a great one in another; but he was a founder. Therefore it had become necessary to unlock the grasp of his "dead hand" from its hold upon the wealth of posterity. Now the wealth upon which this particular hand was locked, was in two portions of unequal value. There were the old schoolroom and schoolhouse and estates, which yielded an income of about a thousand pounds. This was the founder's legacy. But then there were the new school-buildings, and a dozen boarding-houses, which had been built (with some slight help from friends), by the masters of the recent school. This was private property. The proportion which the capital of the founder

bore to that of his successors, was that of one to nine. Practically then, the school as it stood, was not a foundation, but a large private enterprise. But the Government proposed to deal with it as if it were an endowed school, in reality as well as in name. Was legislation under the Act to be arrested just because a wretched nine-tenths of the place was the property of private owners?

Edward Thring thought it was. At any rate, in the draft-scheme, which the commission had prepared, there were two proposals, which would have to pass, in a sense hardly metaphorical, over his body. The first was a measure of secularization. There was to be no provision for the maintenance of the school's character as a Church foundation. The head-mastership was to be open to non-Churchmen. Considering the history of the place, ancient and recent, I feel at this interval a doubt whether this proposal was serious, or only a bit of the Commission's light-heartedness, akin to that other frolic mood, in which they offered to remodel a cathedral foundation into a school for girls. ("Petticoats in our monastic cloister!" cried the Chapter, and the scheme was dead).

Still the guns had to be brought up against the attack, and opposition in Parliament was prepared:

a field battery of at least two M.P.'s was loaded and primed.

It was round the other point, however, that the main battle lay. The scheme created, in place of the old body of governors, in whom the foundation was vested, a new board of "managers," who were to control, not only the finance and the appointment of headmaster, but the nature and proportion of the school studies, if not the hours and the methods of teaching. What kind of thing would a headmaster be under such a constitution? It was the dethronement of professional educators by amateurs or worse. Schoolmastering by county magnates! Where but in England, where any one was thought fit to do anything, if he was a gentleman and a good fellow, would the weird fancy have been conceived? And the principle of "skill by limping sway disabled" was, of all places in England, to be tried at Uppingham, and on Edward Thring. No!

I am conscious that royal commissions and draft-schemes impart to a narrative a dry official taste, which may disguise the emotions of the time. But those emotions were keen. It was not for his own hand alone that he was fighting. Whatever was carried for Uppingham, would be law for schools

less able to defend themselves.[1] It was, as the sequel well proved, no mistaken self-importance which led us to think, that a cause of freedom in education hinged, at this moment, on us. But the personal stake, too, was a heavy one. Uppingham, under the proposed constitution, would be no place for Edward Thring. His original and venturous work there had owed little help to the now moribund "governors," of the founder's creation. They had watched his early struggles with an aloofness of mind, as of epicurean gods, qualified perhaps by such misgivings as a race of ancient gods must feel towards the activities of a new lord of thunder. They had their ways of giving effect to those misgivings, but these did not include interference with internal arrangements. But an earthly providence of 'managers,' to arrange his time-table, and generally keep his genius straight—that spelt resignation. He had made his mind up to win his cause or go.

When, in his earliest conversations with me, on

[1] A letter written by Thring a dozen years later, to a correspondent who asked advice in his own difficulties, will illustrate this :—

"My view is simple. The skilled workman ought to be allowed uncontrolled management of the work. Governors ought to sanction his plan of work originally ; and act as police afterwards to see that the work up to a fair average is honestly done. . . . No work can flourish over a series of years which is exposed to interference from local amateurs in authority."

my arrival, he told me this, I felt, as an Uppinghamian, that it was a hard saying. To leave his work at the moment of danger, because the Government made bad laws, seemed the counsel of weariness or pride. It was not so. He had taken counsel with his own clear spirit only, and, as always, when the issue was a large one, he was right. To work, he said, under a system radically wrong, and so to countenance a false theory of education, which his expressed opinions pledged him to resist, and against which his whole school life had been a battle, might look like loyalty to Uppingham, but would be to betray the wider cause. "Rather than that, I am ready to begin life over again at fifty." (What this meant for him we knew.) And then Uppingham? What was Uppingham to him except as the place where the cause could be served? Save for that, his heart was not here.

It was the first time I had heard this note sounded, and the moment and place are remembered keenly. They singularly fitted the speech. He paused in his walk at the point where, out of one of the broad green lanes of that country, a path turns northward towards the town, and the white high-roofed school chapel on the hill comes into view. "No, what was this place to him?

What he had done was little cared for here, and very few understood it. But," he went on with a glow, "elsewhere, others did. Just when he had thought he was fighting his battle single-handed, and almost without sympathy, friends had sprung up for him among strangers, and made his cause theirs, believed in it, and worked to save it. He did not know how to thank them for it. Why should they have done it? But they had, and it had given him heart again for the fight."

It was not from the likeliest quarters that his new friends had sprung up. They were chiefly north-country business men, who had placed sons under his care, but were not otherwise called upon by their circumstances to be enthusiastic in educational causes. But they understood, I think, what good work is; they knew a man when they saw him; and they held the robust view that good work and good men should be helped, wherever you find them. And no one will be surprised that a man, whose life was a war with conventionalism, should complain of being lonely in his own circle. It is the world-old privilege of the prophet, though it may be doubted if all the abundance of precedents clears the prophet's circle from responsibility for the fact. The fact, however,

not the responsibility, is all it here concerns us to notice.

The day of decisive battle with the Commission was just upon us, at the moment to which the last paragraphs refer. From an interview to which he had been called, he returned to us with triumphant news. The Commission had been "tamed." The interview had opened in a somewhat militant spirit, to which it might be rash to assert that he had himself contributed nothing. The jaded air which hangs about green cloth was likely to become more electric when he sat at it. He had, early in the interview, explained that if the commission did not attend to the school's wishes, the matter would be taken before Parliament. "But, Mr. Thring," said a commissioner, "you will be running your head against a stone wall." "That's just exactly what I mean to do, my lord," was the reply, of which we may believe the manner and accent ably seconded the sense. The remonstrant, presently, whether called away by other business, or doubtful, after this sally, if the table were broad enough, withdrew. The stream of the interview then flowed with a peaceful current. The commissioners, whose general cordiality he admitted, were convinced, and a new draft was promised.

One incident of the meeting suggests reflections. Thring was arguing the injustice of the State's seizing on his work, in a manner so absolute and arbitrary, merely on the strength of its claim upon the small fraction of the funds which had descended from the founder. "Ah!" said a commissioner, laughing, "that has struck your friend Mr.———. He asks, 'Couldn't we buy up the foundation?'" That heroic solution served only for a moment's cheerfulness. But, now, one asks whether a great opportunity was not lost when the inspired suggestion was let die. It was feasible, and if done in a generous spirit by men who meant to be founders, not shareholders (though it must be owned the times did not encourage founders), might have been the liberation of a worker, whom fate had unequally yoked with Government and Governing bodies.

It was a few weeks after this incident, that he asked me to take service under him. A matter personal to the writer would have no place in the narrative, except as a necessary date, if it were not that the choice of subordinates is an act in which a chief's character appears, and that the present is the one such act of which I know much. He

gave the appointment in words which would reveal much of his character, if seals could be broken—words whose pure and high accents made of a professional engagement a sacred soldier's oath. The man thought nobly of his office who welcomed a follower to "a soldier's place, and in no mean regiment, with work for the brave and the true, and the blessing of the weary at close of day."

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

CHAPTER II.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

THE Rutland pasturelands are excellent for walkers. The views are pleasant, if not remarkable, and you may wander to see them almost where you like. The woodsides, the broad, green rides, the field paths, and their stiles, over which he no longer jumped, as ten years before, nor yet lifted a stiffening limb, as he did ten years later, the hedgerow ashes, at which, in that tardy summer of 1873 he railed more bitterly than usual, for their "delay to clothe themselves" in leaf, were the scenery to many conversations, in which I began to learn the mind of my old schoolmaster. The time when a man renews acquaintance, on terms of relative equality, with the object of a boyish admiration, must always, one would think, be a critical experience; and there is much in that renewal being made auspiciously. So it seemed to me a

good fortune, that one who had looked so great to a boy's eyes, should be met again in circumstances which did not belittle him. He was standing at bay, fighting for his twenty years' work: the light of battle was on his face, and nothing so well became him. Of battles we may have enough to say in good time. Just now I would rather remember the leisure hours of his public life, and his rural disputations, among the hedgerows and on hillocks green of the least of all shires.

The mind with which I now made acquaintance defined itself to me by a piquant contrast. To come from the schools and commonrooms of Oxford into its atmosphere, was to exchange the loaded air of cities for the mountain side. Behind was much jaded intellectuality, a dimness of suspended judgment, and action half-distrustful and half-ashamed of itself: here, all was alacrity, distinctness, confidence. The flattened lungs expanded to the keen air, and took in great breaths of it delightedly. Of course you cannot have everything on the mountains. If you find breezes, wide prospects, health, you must not murmur at some bareness and rusticity: and, in intercourse with a mind so tonic in its influence on others, through its elevation and solitariness, it would

have been idle to complain of a want of relation to the thought of contemporaries, and unacquaintance with the Comparative Method. As well complain of scant furniture in a mountain inn. Subtle criticism, delicate interpretation, suggestion, allusiveness, the light play of mind over the surface of the deeps of knowledge, belong to other training than his had been; but these could be foregone, while his massive enthusiasms made "large mornings shine," and life seemed to run from him into the listener's veins.

The name "disputations" given above, with an obvious reference, will seem, to some who knew him, inaccurate as a description of his talks. The element of inquiry and debate held in them too slight a proportion, where there was any plain inequality between himself and his hearers, and, in a party of many, you often, as Lamb said of Coleridge, "heard him lecture." But this was not true of the single-handed game. The difficulty which an interlocutor found there was not how to fill his proportional space in the talk, but only how to make the interlocution become a discussion. Argument, the friendly argument of two sympathetic inquirers, was not his forte, and its special delights were not to be had in his company.

Dialectic belongs probably to a different order of mind. If Plato has it, or the pretence of it, it would be difficult to imagine Milton arriving at truth by that road. And Edward Thring's intellectual organ was not dialectic, it was intuition. He was, if any one, a man of intuitions. Now you cannot easily have your intuitions in company: you can only report them, and illustrate them. You can hardly even revise them. They do not thrive by collaboration. They do not readily absorb new material in the act of controversy. They are the bliss of solitude, and must be sent back to solitude to be amended. This is the reason why his conversation was more didactic than dialectical. He had grand things to say, but they issued whole and fully formed: you had not the interest of watching the gradual, dubious birth and growth of a thought, the mist of an embryo conception, clearing its outline, "a cloud that gathered shape," as the winds of counter minds blow on it from this side and that: you had not the warming of the blood, as the argument grows conscious of advance, the momentary languor at an *impasse*, the glow of spirit when the obstacle gives way, and the eye suddenly masters the field. Instead, there was a quieter, but, in our world of many books,

rarer pleasure, the contemplation of a mind solitary, original, and sincere, which philosophized untaught. Untaught, one may say, for he had not been a student, at least for a score of years, and whatever he owed to reading had covered up its footmarks in the passage through his mind. Yet, in the truest sense, he philosophized. What belongs to the philosopher—the range of vision, the impulse to generalize, systematize, and co-ordinate, to detect the one in the many, the combining law in varied phenomena and contrasted fields—all this was his. It was keen pleasure for a young companion, fresh from the Oxford schools, to listen to a lonely sage, who knew not the philosophers, and held them in some contempt, but spoke again their large thoughts in his own more rugged idiom. The schoolmen commonly smile at thinkers "bred up in the inland valleys, thinking ancient thoughts anew and not knowing them ancient." But ancient thoughts are new, at least for the listener, when they come with a native accent, Attic philosophy pronounced with Dorian breadth. And then it is an old reproach against philosophers to be weak in action, or not to carry their conclusions into it. But here was a man whose thinking and doing were of one stuff, whose public action had been in a singular degree

the working out in practice of an early-formed conception, and who could scarcely utter a view which did not sound like a transcript from experience. *Pectus facit theologum* was never better illustrated than in him.

I am tempted to follow up further the remark made above, that he was characteristically a man of intuitions, for it is a fact in the light of which half his idiosyncrasies are interpreted. With it I connect his mysticism, his depreciation of the intellectual side of life, the imperativeness of his conclusions and their impenetrability by counter-views, and, in matter of style, his love of trope, and his gift for aphorism.

Intuition is an act as to the nature of which psychologists may be divided, but thus much is clear, that it is an act in which it is very hard to see how it is done. The thinker who proceeds by ratiocination, and the conscious measuring of reasons for and against, weighing grain by grain this scale and that, can tell you exactly what particle made the balance incline ; he can revise his process without much ado, and readjust the balance, if a new increment has to be thrown into either scale. But the thinker whose instrument is intuition comes and sweeps his eye over the

field of facts, and delivers judgment, "the truth lies thus or thus." The process is a solid whole, without visible parts or stages, so that there is no taking it to bits to overhaul it when any one questions its soundness. This was why people with an itch for logic were sometimes annoying to him; not because he was averse to the trial of wits, but because its method and his own had no common principle; the pedestrian march of logic, and the intuitive flight, could not keep step, and the companionship was hampering and irritating. Often, it is true, in his writings or lessons, he would frame a thought in a logical mode, and array a syllogism or a train of demonstration; but I am inclined to think that his logic, as some one said of another man's moral earnestness, was "only his fun." Nor, again, is there any telling how the result of an intuition will be affected by the addition of a new element; such an addition is not quantitative, like a fresh weight in one scale, but qualitative; so the intuition must be done over again before the new consideration can be absorbed. This was part of the reason why in discussion he was so inhospitable to suggestions, unless they harmonized with his own view, or were expansions of it; and it was a still larger part of the reason why a rejected suggestion was

often found not to be wasted; give it time to be assimilated by him in a new vision, and the bread cast upon the waters would be found after many days. Disputants put this down to self-opiniativeness, but the juster explanation is the one I have given.

Then, again, this unaccountability of the act of intuition breeds mental confidence. A judgment gained, one knows not how, has a sort of sanctity, and seems more inspired than those of which you can say "these are their reasons, they are natural." Much which people called dogmatic in his talk had a dignified excuse in his mysticism.

Again, he was a sworn foe of the pretensions of the intellect. Talks, sermons, books, lessons, were full of onslaughts on "knowledge-power," "hard intellect force," the "gladiators" of logic, which I remember struck people as odd in a schoolmaster. And indeed it was overdone, when his hearers were a set of boys, rarely tempted to sins of intellectuality. He might have exalted the moral element, "right love and right hate," which was his real aim, without trampling so heavily on the mental. But undoubtedly his zeal for a moralized intellect had one of its roots in this character of his own mental operations. An intuition seems so much more

than ratiocination to be an act of the whole nature, to be the fruit of character, and therefore almost a moral act.

And last I bring under the same explanation some qualities of his style. He was exuberant in tropes, and he was great in aphorisms. Imagery was the natural expression of a mind which saw truth in imagery, in pictures flashed upon the mental eye ; and the abrupt, isolated aphorism was well fitted to convey conclusions which, however correct, could not, by the nature of the case, produce their premises, and were left as it were in the air.

We seem to have got a little away from the hedge-rows and hillocks green, in our late psychological excursion. I apologize, and return. We must speak about his customary topics. Always of course there are politics. But in these days politics were respectable, and their discussion dry. When in recent days they began to burn, he took the fire. I recall, however, few party questions on which he said anything I am tempted to record, except two political episodes, to which he found analogies in his own professional life. I remember his disgust with a commissioner of works for ill-treating Dr. Hooker of Kensington Gardens, at the time

when he was fighting his own battle at Uppingham, against the interference of the official with the specialist; and again, the gusto with which he welcomed the announcement that the Government had ordered Indian troops to Malta. "I rather like, you know, their having done it without consulting Parliament." Did I not know it? and who that knows his history lacks the clue to his enthusiasm?

What is more worth noting in his talk on politics was the air of it. His judgments had a transcendentalism of view and a severity of tone which made you very uncomfortable. It was as if you had risen from a club armchair, and the perusal of the morning's leader, to ask Dante what he thought of contemporary affairs. The statute measures of things were startlingly discredited. Sundry right honourables would be referred to as "those evil men," and their speeches and other public operations as "flagitious lying." We thought the language warm at the time. But those were quiet times, when, by a bland convention, it was assumed that public men might err, but could not sin. Things have moved on since then, and to some of us, who then cried out against his extravagance, the field of politics will seem to have swung

into the focus of the severe regard which he bent on it already. Indeed, in his judgments on public and on national life, he appears, as I look back, to have had a distinct gift of prescience; it was not the prescience of study, or knowledge of the world; it was based on a fine discernment of the drift of character, and the set of moral currents, with boldness in trusting its conclusions. That is a form of prescience which has very high affinities; but since the name of "prophet" has of late become literary slang among the effusive, and can therefore no longer be given to one's friends, it must remain here uncharacterized.

Then there was science, at that time a lively topic in England. Towards its recent pretensions he was in stalwart antagonism. The reported "origin of species," was a thing he was not going to give in to. "Nursery babble" was his succinct criticism of the popular evolutionism. That struck some people as bigoted. "Why surely, Mr. Thring," I heard a lady plead, "the theories of these men, who have been giving all their lives to this subject, cannot be judged by us who have not." "My dear Mrs.——, if a man showed you his new map of England, and you looked at it, and found he had got all the roads in the neighbourhood of your

rectory wrong, would you think the rest of his map worth anything?" The neighbourhood, in which he corrected the map of the evolutionists, was that of the human instincts and moral experience. He was just fresh from writing a book, *Life-Science*, which I can only glance at here, directed at scientific pretensions. This book could, from the nature of the case, be only a plain man's say, such a book as the heart writes when "like a man in wrath" it "stands up and answers, I have felt." For such books there is a place, however. Whether or no he contributed by it anything to the logical armoury of Christian apologetics, he brought something hardly less precious to the defenders of ancient positions—heartiness in his own belief, and iron unimpressibility against the noise and flourishes of an enemy. When knees are weak, and people are extravagantly afraid of being illiberal or dull, it is bracing to hear a man with brains get up and roundly pronounce the solemn reasonings of the opposite champions to be only "nursery babble." The criticism may be inexact, and yet, like the state-fiction in Plato be very good "by way of a drug," a useful nerve-tonic for the mind.

Nature is a subject hardly to be excluded from a field-walk. The feeling for nature, which was a strong

element in him, was twofold, that of the sportsman and that of the mystic. I use the former word incorrectly but conveniently, to denote his taste for the open air life, scantily gratified in fact, and his delight in the ways of animals. The country-gentleman impulses were in his blood, though opportunity had not favoured them: they had to express themselves in his affectionate discipline of his colley, and the petting of his rural friends in the Fairfield aviary, who would flutter to their network to pick seeds from his finger or off his lips. The mystic in him was more easily indulged in this sedentary life, and came abroad with us on many a ramble. The spiritual regard he turned towards nature, his reverent interest in her, as a half transparent veil of moral realities, is perhaps shortly indicated by calling him a Wordsworthian. But Wordsworthians have not often his naive thoroughness. We have known him report the incident of a singular burst of sunshine, on a stormy evening among the mountains, with bated tones, as of one who had witnessed the miraculous. From this, to the rapture, for which he would pull up short to look at one of nature's effects on the minute scale, as some starry blossom in a dark nook, or a festoon of bryony in a hedgerow, is a step. But the

admiration was the same: it was mystical, not æsthetic. And of this kind, too, was the solace, which nature brought him. She did not merely soothe him, as she does other weary or aging men, like the quiet hand of affection. She whispered him a message with articulate contents. Speaking one day of his sense of disappointment in his practical aims, he added, "But what consoles me is the sight of *life* everywhere: the rush of life in the tree and the grass. That is a wonderful comfort, that thought." To any one new to his ways, this will seem, as indeed it did to me, an oddly detached remark, wanting an interpreting link. Just for that reason it is significant. It was a bit of his thinking aloud.

Books? Did he talk about books? Not with much readiness, or, for him, with much zest. This was, in part, because his memory was, for literature, not a very good one: he could not command his stores, had small facility in quotation and illustration. He has paid memory out for this in his writings by more than one shrewd cudgel blow, bestowed on that dull "beast of burden carrying precious things for others." Again he had no leisure to be the student; in term he could not read books, and in his holidays he had to make them. But, also, it

must be said that in the world of books he was not a native, but a sojourner. In a sense which we wish not to be misunderstood, when we are speaking of a brilliant classical scholar, a strenuous author, and a stout champion of education by literature, the literary nature proper was not his. There are signs by which we detect the true lover, of books as of other things. There is the physical delight in their atmosphere, the instinct to turn to and touch them, tender susceptibilities in regard to their outward and visible. Now it seemed to me a bad sign when he said he detested cutting a new book's pages. No sympathetic rapture, then, ran through the paper-knife to his fingers! There you have the rude practical temperament behaving itself impatiently in the quiet close of letters. Just so the eager man of action stands bonily out through those nervous, unstudied sentences of his prose. I think we have to add that his sense of literary form was defective. He was regardless of it in his business penmanship, which was incisive, but often not too clear, and still oftener not elegant. He would read an inferior book, without being offended with its poor English, if the moral was good: and though he had in literature some intense admirations, they did not evidence

sensibility to style. Thus, in the classics, he was most at home with Aeschylus, Lucretius, and Tacitus: while of Virgil he never seemed to catch the inner charm, and, as far as I could make out, liked Ovid's hexameters quite as well. In English, he loved Wordsworth, who according to Matthew Arnold "has no style," with a most exclusive love. He read, I believe, all Wordsworth, not, like most of us, his inspired nucleus, but all. Much of Wordsworth's poetry was written, we are sure, in obedience to principle: it was a kindred love of principle, which upbore his reader along tracts of blank verse, where others faint by the way. We are speaking, of course, only of the sense for literary style. For it is worth noticing, that he did himself only honour by his devotion to his poet: there was kinship between the two, and it was the poet's intense and pure interest in the primary affections, even more than his sense of the "joy offered to us in nature," which drew his follower. Every Uppingham boy of a certain period can still hear him reciting "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," and can recover the passion in the voice at the cadence

> "*But she is in her grave, and, oh,*
> *The difference to me.*"

We must not expand this reference to his defective feeling for form in literature, but we may note a cause of it in his character. "The style is the man" is, in this case, not a useful paradox, but a matter of fact description. The moral intensity of him upset the power of measure and proportion, and denied him the artistic grace of reserve.

His conversation, in a score of little traits of exaggerative emphasis, reflected this disturbance. "Wonderful," "Stupendous," "Inconceivable," were epithets which lost their specific meaning by use and wear, and became mere emotional accents. The arts of understatement and irony, at least of the playful kind, were in no account with him. The thing before his mind at the moment would become "the greatest truth of life" or "the supreme working fact." We boys used to report of him, whether truly or with only dramatic truth I do not know, that on a certain essay of Bacon's he ejaculated "Bacon *never spoke a greater lie* than when he wrote 'what is truth? said *jesting* Pilate';" which was only his forcible way of pointing out that Pilate really was in earnest, and not a judgment on the philosopher's general veracity.

Who forgets the leaded accents with which he would say—"that's *fatal!*" of some arrangement,

which we should have been content to call inconvenient? Who the manner with which he would "defy any man to"—do something very mild, and unsuggestive of war and challenge? Who the once invariable introduction of a view in a school harangue, "I *hold*"—as if it were a fort, and he held it in force, men and guns, and no surrender.

One more remark, and we have done. The kind of humour with which his books overflow comes into the same story. When most elaborate, it is least amusing, for want of lambency. Moral intensity spoiled him for both forms of humour, it denied him the abandon wanted for the boisterous form, and the reticence, and power of separating himself from his subject, which are needed for the delicate and ironical. Where his humour told was in sudden, single blows, which he could put his strength into, and which were not of humour, but wit. Boys were much pleased with his promise to "teach them a lesson," in some matter of discipline, "illustrated by *wood-cuts*," and would repeat the story of his quashing an abortive hiss, as he left the room, after some displeasing announcement, by a turn of the head, and "There are just two animals which hiss, snakes and —geese: take your choice, gentlemen!" There was

a peculiar grave humorousness in such sayings, of an order most characteristic of him, as this one, which I find in a letter, where he referred to critics of his management in an unprosperous time : "The crows gather round the sick sheep ; but the crows are not shepherds." Livelier is this from another letter, in which he remarks "It has always seemed to me very wrong, when people have deliberately, for years, set themselves against a thing, then at last, when, in spite of their efforts, it succeeds, to let them go off with a flourish of trumpets, and wipe their dirty hands on the back of success." These are in a stern vein ; but a fountain of bright fun breaks out in his sigh, as he contrasted his lot with another man's—"Here I spend my days in leading jackasses up Parnassus," and in the gusto of his explosion, when some one's sermons were described as dry :—"Dry ? Why, my good fellow, brickdust is butter to him."

* * * * * *

But here we are back at the edge of the pleasant fields, and at the head of the "one meane streete." The change of surroundings affects his mood. Expansiveness is replaced by wariness and discomfort, as of a soldier crossing a zone of fire, and he keeps a stern look out down the street vista.

What is it?

I must claim for the Rutland pastures a rare charm: they grow, as I have before remarked, according to the census, only one man to every three of other shires: and, as a fact of experience, you may walk in them, and never meet a soul.

THE SHADOW.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHADOW.

WHAT manner of man Edward Thring was in the world of boys, my earlier chapters have tried to indicate. What he was in a world of men, I began to learn, when service taken under him placed him before my eyes in a new scene. "King of boys" he had been called in an epigram of this time. How was he as a king of men? It is another tale, and one along which my pen travels more heavily: for the tale has sadness in it.

If an ideal aim casts a beam on the life vowed to it, it casts also a shadow to match. There was a shadow in this life, and it fell upon his partnership in work. We could not deny it, if we would. Rather let us try to interpret it.

It is easiest to begin with a criticism, which I have heard reiterated for more than a score of years. "What a pity it is he does not get on

better with his masters." A criticism of that persistency and notoriety, has to be examined: there is no help for it. You cannot sing the Tale of Troy, and leave out the wrath of Achilles.

The allegation involved must be admitted, and no one would have admitted it more frankly than himself. Unless it be in the earliest years, for which other witnesses must speak, it would be hard to say when cordiality between chief and staff was general and secure. The only question to ask is, How did this come about? There exists a well-seasoned theory of this, held by outsiders, which must take precedence by seniority. "Thring is such an autocrat." That is not a charge against which a headmaster, who is also a reformer and a founder, needs to be defended. But neither is it any explanation. There is no reason why an autocrat should have an unquiet reign. There are relevant instances to the contrary. And I cheerfully advance the paradox, that the disquiet arose largely from his not being autocratic enough. If he could, and would, have simply gone his own way, and removed out of it, stoutly and silently, any one who got in it, there would have been a peace, which need not have been a solitude Where there is any fixed discordance between associates

in a work, the work's prosperity, no less than their private ease, suggests separation. But to effect it calls for a kind of hardness, which weaker, but less scrupulous men than he possess, but which he had not. It is the good, of whom "conscience doth make cowards," in this sort, and it was a moral sensitiveness which made him over-tender, as sometimes certainly to incompetence, so also, as I think, to incompatibility. It is, however, hard to judge this point, for circumstances, even more than conscience, spoilt his hand. The school could not be built up without the creation of vested interests, and of hampering obligations to the subordinate builders. All honour to the men who risked money at his side in the outset, trusting his star: it is an honour he was assiduous in rendering them. Still their ventures created between himself and them, or their successors, relations which could not conveniently exist in the case of a man with his temperament and genius. Fortune was unkind to him here. Having gifted him to command a ship, she ought not to have set him to the work of a party leader. But to such a task she did, in a degree, commit him. And it was not his. It was not only that he lacked the tact, pliancy, and social ingenuity and versatility, that he did not know the

party leader's arts of foreseeing and neutralizing opposition, of soothing hurt feelings, of minimizing differences and assuming agreements, of making much of the little good deeds of little men, and so compromising them on the side of virtue, of listening deferentially to talk, and then disregarding it:—it was that his very virtues fought against him : his truth revolted against economies ; in dealing with prejudice or dulness his own poignant vision of a fact made it incredible to him that others could honestly see it otherwise ; his moral absoluteness cast on conduct a fierce light in which falterings looked black as treasons.

Let us not deny that foibles too played their part in his difficulties with associates. There is an irritability of energy, and there is an irritability of sensitiveness. He was the last man to escape either, in a life, especially, of over-strain and a fretting kind of infirmity ; and some share in the prevention of pleasant intercourse may be assigned to this cause. But, in my opinion, a very small share only. It may be true, and necessary to say, that once and again a flash of asperity left a wound in a subordinate : it is far more true and important to say that those who knew him, saw in him a hot spirit in the grasp of a splendid self-mastery.

That of which those, whose intercourse with him was not happy, are more likely to complain, is an absolutism of manner. Of manner, I say, not of action. Unfortunately it is the former kind which is the more resented. Most people you may safely coerce, if you forbear to snub them ; you may forbid them to act, if you allow them to argue. Not that there was any repression of argument in Uppingham council-chambers: a constitutionalist would have had to go to other schools for examples of restrictions on discussion ; and, since the day when he started the weekly meeting of masters, he believed that there never failed from his side men, who, in the nervous phrase of his choice, "could talk a donkey's hind leg off." Still it is true, that those who had the task of disputing a question with him, had a task more stimulating than pleasant, at any rate where there was not a wide basis of sympathy. Stimulating it did seem to be, and they "snatched a fearful joy" in it, or so one thought. The fear, however, was not of the master of twenty legions. The severity to be faced was rather that of a man, who, in an intellectual difference, would recognize a difference of moral view, and would disagree in accents which were felt to condemn. Here we touch on the deepest cause

of disharmony, so far as it can be laid to his blame.

To these admissions I shall not add any countenance of murmurs, sometimes heard, against his methods of disciplining his staff, believing them to be the brood of illusion "without father bred." In the discipline of subordinates, his mistake, if any, was on the side of liberty. At least I am repeating a judgment formed long ago, and often refortified, when I express the criticism that he gave his men too free a hand. Had he exacted more work, and had he broken down (a far more difficult task) some of the independence of house-masters, who, in their scattered dwellings, lived a little too much like the Cyclopes of old, complaints of despotism would have been fewer, not more.

I have tried to state and examine the popular explanation of these relations to fellow-workers. It is altogether superficial. Make what you will of autocracy, impatience, love of battle, and an absolute manner, they are not the account of the matter. These were stormy forces which would, in good time, like the storm water, have worn smooth channels for themselves, had they been the whole of the disturbing cause. Men as hot and masterful have trained themselves, under

the pressure of social circumstances and business exigencies, to play the bland bureaucrat; and though it is a little unthinkable, he might have done the same. No. The account of the matter is, I believe, summarily given in saying that he was of those who bring upon earth not peace, but a sword. The prime, all-explaining fact in his life, is that he was possessed by an idea. Possession is, in his case, no conventional metaphor: his idea ran in every current of his being, and made every fibre of him its instrument. And it was an idea of that order which most absorbs the holder—the religious. He was called to apply, in a new and neglected field, a cardinal truth of Christianity, to make it known, as I have seen it finely said of him, "that every boy had a soul to be saved." With this sacred fire in his bones, he was foredoomed to war. For he had to fulfil his mission, not as a solitary preacher of righteousness, who could only be persecuted, but as an organizer who could be frustrated and betrayed; he had to found, and construct, and systematize; to spend money, and make contracts; to call in allies and surround himself with other wills.

One or other of two things was then bound to happen. Either he must call into existence an

order of fellow-workers, a Round Table knighthood, who would make his cause their own, and for its sake and his make light of difficulties within, and disappointments without; or else there must come, in their due stages, dissatisfaction, misunderstandings, mistrust, the reality, or appearance, of cross purposes, and growing alienation: the magnet which had not attracted would repel, the idea, which had not been a cement, would become an explosive. It was not the former alternative which happened. Even to name it is to provoke a smile—or a tear. Perhaps it was a thing too good to hope for. That a man should come to a life-work, furnished not only with genius, but also with human instruments, apt and enough, is more than could be expected, from the left-handedness of mortal affairs. No doubt a certain order of genius creates its own instruments: a Buonaparte makes his marshals. But, we incline to think, this is truer of the mundane order of genius than of the spiritual, and that it is easier to manufacture marshals than disciples.

At any rate there was no Table Round at Uppingham. It is the second and sad alternative which is our history. Thring believed that he never found effective sympathy with his essential

purposes from more than a very small minority of his colleagues. "I disclaim," he says in one of his later letters, "having been a leader here." The explanation of the fact may be in dispute, the fact itself cannot. No malign explanation will come from the pen which here records the fact. I think that Edward Thring was so far happy that he did find helpers in his earliest, and most critical, days, who offered to his idea the very practical sympathy of venturing money and careers in its service; that of moral sympathy he in some cases got more than he recognized, as, in others, he recognized more than he really got; that, even where sympathy was very little, his standard told powerfully upon the standards of those below him. But disciples, men "all one will" with him, he did not find. And, for the reason, I am thrown back on the very tame, but most credible, explanation, that the helpers whom he selected were mostly, and in most respects, very much like other people, and thought as they did. But that was just the mischief. To be like other people, and to think as they thought, was to be, however little it was thought or meant, in the opposite camp. When the cause is a war of a spiritual idea with popular ideas, the ally who

holds conventional standards is in arms against it. "He that gathereth not with us, scattereth," was the leader's own view of it; and this, if regarded as a statement of fact, not a judgment on character, is simply true. It was not that his own mind could not tolerate neutrality. Circumstances could not tolerate it. The work undertaken could not get rightly done, except under two conditions. The first was, that the distinctiveness of its idea should be acknowledged, and emphasized. For the purity of his belief the prophet was right to be "very jealous." It was not self-esteem, but self-preservation, which prompted him to assert the differences between his principles and others, however admirable, which ruled elsewhere. It was no egotism to want help in this, to crave for a company of allies who would be partners of his thought, as well as of his action, "believing his belief, moved by his reasons, hoping his hope, seeing the vision he pointed to, beholding a glory where he beheld it." The stoutest faith is stouter when it is echoed, and does not declaim into a void. And, if a capacity for conviction, most rare in this generation, was given him, there was in the man a sensitiveness, also rare, which made men's hearts more useful to him than their hands, and

disciples more necessary than colleagues. "Hardly any one here sees it," was his complaint, first and last. The next condition was, that the idea should be enforced, within the sphere of the school, with all the moral authority of the place. Unity of conviction or not, unity of resistance to popular opinion was a necessary demand from whoever took part in his work. He aimed at a definite standard of life among boys, and this was in excess of popular standards, was aimed at by new and unpopular methods, and had the prestige of fashion against it. It was not easy to bear up against that prestige, and overcome the resistance which boys' minds offer to exacting requirements, which they hear outsiders describe as crotchets. It was needed, that hostile criticism should be thought by boys to find no lodgment and leverage in quarters of authority; that their commonplace craving to be "like all the nations," and travel in the rut of the fashionable schools, should be felt to meet with severe discountenance; that rival practices and theories should be discussed indeed but always with the constitutional assumption that our institutions were of the best, though there might be better; that our polity might be developed, but not revolutionized. In short, it was

necessary that, if a colleague could add nothing to his chief by sympathy, at least he should add nothing to the impact of hostile tendencies from without.

Was this too much to ask in days of freedom of opinion, from men who might be most honest dissentients? The first answer is, that the Uppingham idea was a militant idea, and demanded allegiance of the military type. The place should have been a camp. None need have come, or stayed, who could not keep the *sacramentum*. But there is another answer. Beyond what is required by professional obligation and stated contract, we must think that genius in command has a claim on men's adhesion and sympathy, which mediocrity in command has not. It is a claim which cannot be closely defined: it is a tax which cannot be levied, if it is refused, but which cannot be refused without heavy responsibility incurred. If high gifts lay a duty on the owner, they lay a secondary duty on the bystanders, whose moral attitude provides, or denies, the conditions of their prosperous use. The privileges of genius are in some discredit, because they have been claimed on behalf of unscrupulousness and license. One right, however, is inalienable, the right to be

followed. Freedom of opinion does not include the freedom of getting in the way of genius, in its own sphere of operations, even under the plea of saving genius from itself.

This is as far as we will go. It has been necessary to notice a dissidence, which tinged with very sad colours the whole life of the subject of my sketch. A fact, which bears so immediately upon the interpretation of his character and achievements, could not be omitted by a spectator, who was better placed than others were for observation. He desires however that the scope and limits of his remarks should be noted. There is no history here of internal jars, no uncurtaining of domestic rubbish. He has attempted to give his own theory of the mental and other conditions, on either side, which brought the dissidence about. But he has given it in highly generalized language, without detail or anecdote, name or date. Less he could not say, and be true to the purpose of the sketch. More he could not say, and be just to the susceptibilities of living persons. There have been wounds enough in this old war: none shall be added here which faithfulness to the dead can spare.

Wounds enough! Here are his words, in his

later life, to one who was setting out on new responsibilities. "Perhaps I am the worst man in the world to cheer you on your way, with words such as men love to hear, on the threshold of new life: the best to bid you never despair, but believe in life to the end. I cannot do the first: the scars are too deep, and the weakness too great. The last I can do, because the scars are so deep, and the weakness so great, and yet the life-power has passed into so many channels."

The discipline of suffering which these words recall, was one prepared for him within the household of his faith. But it *was* a discipline; and those who look deepest, will least regret it for his sake. The loss lies elsewhere. It is the one unappeasable regret, that the cause of such a man should have been the cause, not of the many, but the few.

ARMA VIRUMQUE.

CHAPTER IV.

ARMA VIRUMQUE.

"WHO burnt Thorpe windmill last fifth?" This was the question which was flying alive through the mouths of men, when November, 1873, impended over Uppingham.

Thorpe hill, a naked, earthy tumulus, stands above Thorpe hamlet on the banks of Welland, and Thorpe windmill once stood upon Thorpe hill. It stands there no more.

On the night of Guy Fawkes, 1872, there was a Walpurgis revel on the heights above the sleeping hamlet, and the flame of a sudden holocaust terrified the midnight. Then Thorpe windmill sank into its ashes.

Who had done this deed? It was an important question for others than the owner of the vanished mill. That piece of mechanism, long out of gear, but picturesque upon the lonely rise, had become a

more valuable property of the artist than of the corn grinder. But the outrageous hand which fired it might fire a barn, or a haystack; and, indeed, there had been abortive fire-raising elsewhere, on the same bad festival. Nay, there had been arson complicated with sacrilege: the rector's cowshed had been afire, but these impious flames had not prospered. Uppingham could not watch unmoved the conflagration of "neighbour Ucalegon." Still less as she believed herself to be the dishonoured mother who had given birth to this torch. Suspicion, and something a shade darker than suspicion, fell on some of the gilded youth of her burghers. These were still in her midst, known but unconvicted, probably even unrepentant, and scheming new bonfires to astonish their fellow-citizens in 1873. Whose barns, or sheddings, were safe? The Midland blood is not a mercurial fluid, but at burnt haystacks it gets up.

Uppingham town had not always turned for advice to the schoolhouse. The genius of its occupant, among its indirect effects, had rescued the little burgh from decay, by restoring its industries, to supply the growing needs of the school. To him the townsmen owed it that their property was so well worth its fire-insurance. To owe your pros-

perity to another is a debt, as a modern politician has remarked, easier to forget than to forgive. So he had not become their patron saint. Nor was his advice, as when he had early counselled drainage reform (Oh, purblind hearts of Uppingham householders!) and backed his word with a big subscription, received with anything at all like halfpence. But it is in agitating circumstances that we seek the deserted oracle seats, and so, in the first hours of November, town came to the feet of gown. Would Mr. Thring kindly be president of a committee for the defence of property?

Mr. Thring replied to the deputation to this effect: "Gentlemen, I shall be glad to do my best for you, but let us understand one another. Do you mean to go through with this? I will not take responsibility, and then be left in the lurch. Before I agree to lead, I wish to know if I am going to be followed?" They hailed him dictator, and swore loyalty.

An army was levied at once. Gownsman and townsman filed before a justice of the peace, and took the oath of special constable. No age or profession exempted itself; the sexagenarian was as the athlete, the white choker was as the white apron. There was even a German Legion, stout

men and true, though philosophically embarrassed between their conflicting fealties to the Constabulary and to the Landwehr. To each man was served out a staff and a badge. The former (it lies before me now upon my table) was a light ruler of deal, rudely branded with characters which are Runic to me. It has much of the symbolic about it. You might perhaps have rapped a felon's knuckles with it, you could not have killed a rabbit. For my own poor part, I had not to attempt either. In our defensive armour, the badge, we believed much more. It was a thick band of white calico, to be worn, shield-like, on the left arm. "Special Constable" was printed broad as daylight upon it. No excuse for any felon who knocked one down. We were sacrosanct, and he knew it.

[It is not a gentle egotism, reader, which led me to remark that these inspiring objects lie on the table as I write this. The fact that they do so is singular; I believe, entirely singular. When peace had sheathed the sword, the officers of the more regular force went round, and disarmed their tumultuary brethren. The present writer however was never at home when they called, and this accident has preserved for his children the heirloom of a father's brand.]

A great leader does not rely only upon force, nor forget the golden bridge. Mandates went out, from the room of the Committee of Public Safety, which overawed the sense of practical humour, even in a November incendiarist. On the morning of the fifth, Catiline was seen riding out of Rome, to visit, for a few days, and nights, an uncle, who lived nowhere near Thorpe hill.

The senate which quelled the Catilinarians met in the Temple of Concord. We met in the lecture hall of the Mutual Improvement Society. Our general, calm and grim, issued the order of the night, and assigned our beats. The army was distributed on a territorial principle. Each patrol party was to watch the roads nearest to its own dwellings. Thus local knowledge and self-interest were enlisted together. Even our dispositions, however, were not to be completed in quiet. There was bustle, and a wrangle, on the steps. Then a fiery-featured man (he manufactured mineral waters in his peaceful hours) burst into our midst, strode up to a certain pallid champion of order, and made as if to seize him by the button and shake him. But he restrained himself, before a truncheon could be bared, and only chastised his adversary with the valour of his tongue. That, however, was hot

enough. What the quarrel was I do not recall except that honour had been touched to the quick: but I remember being struck with a fine old literary quality in the terms with which it was vindicated. After all, you must go lower than the circles of culture, to find the real Shakespearian idiom of invective, and hear a man called a "spaniel" to his face. But it did not last. Up stepped from his seat by the fire the dictator, an image of order, polite, but inexpugnable. "Mr. A., excuse me: I cannot permit this: you shall have full justice done you, if you have cause of complaint; but at the proper time: we are in authority here: I cannot allow disturbance." At which *Quos ego* the storm fell.

We sallied out, in pairs, into the darkness, and paced for several hours all the skirts of Uppingham. Grenadiers were selected for those quarters which faced certain neighbouring villages of disorderly fame. It was expected that the best poaching blood of Pometia would take the field that night. In a safer suburb I cross the beat of a clerical veteran, and exchange the "All's well." He murmurs, dubiously eying his truncheon, "Doesn't look very like a pastoral staff, does it?" but goes stoutly on "pacing the troubled land," between the

town and his boarding-house, "like Peace." In the first of the small hours, patrols were recalled to head-quarters, for fresh instructions. There it was reasoned that masters had better go to bed, as they must be up for school at seven, while townsmen kept the field a little longer. The latter, who had some of them to be up at six, seemed unconvinced. I think they did not outstay us long. At any rate while the stiff limbs of most of us were relaxing in the first slumbers, Panic, in deshabille, knocked at the chamber doors of some three or four sleepers, of most nerve and limb, and hurried them off to attend a bonfire which had flamed up in a back street. They arrived in time to find the embers warm, but the scent cold. Darkness had resumed her children.

That meant that the campaign was not yet over. Next night we waited, each at his billet, but under arms. At nine an alarm called us out, and the patrols took the road again. This time I found myself at the general's side, for companionship, however, not as aide-de-camp. He had chosen a road in one of the more thievish corners, and too near Pometia. The just heavens favoured neither the rogues nor the constables. They sent down blackness, and a soft rain, making the night, like

the ninth day in Virgil's *Shepherd's Calendar*, "good for running away, adverse to rapine"; it aided the fire-raiser's flight, but then it damped his fuel. Under this impartial mood of powers above, we paced our beat, drenched but dogged, with eyes and ears intent upon a farmshed behind the road-side hedge. An hour passed. At last we were rewarded by a sound. Some one was stirring near the shed. They are about it, we thought. "In at that gate, you, I by this, and meet in the middle. We shall have 'em." "We have them? That's as may be," I reflected, but I obeyed orders as soldiers must, and climbed my gate. We stalked the enemy, till we had almost reached the cowshed, and one another. There was a convulsion in the dank air between us, four legs and a tail were heaved into the mirkness, a snorting shape shook the night-dews from its mane, and vanished whinnying into the shadows.

"Thus," as the Saxon chronicler concludes a battle piece, "thus ended the storm of Edward."

CEDANT ARMA TOGÆ.

CHAPTER V.

CEDANT ARMA TOGÆ.

At the time which our narrative has reached, Uppingham had become a Mother of Parliaments. By invitation of its ruler, a group of headmasters met there on December 21st, 1869, to discuss affairs of their profession. It was not a large group; of more than sixty invited, twelve were present. The heads of the greatest schools naturally stood out, till they could see whereto this would grow. It grew to very much. Fostered by the social and practical talent of Thring's ally, Dr. Harper of Sherborne, it sprang quickly into a body powerful enough to fulfil one of its founder's wishes, namely to protect the profession from the "outside tinkering" of Government, at any rate till Governments had had time to know something about the subject. Already in 1873, when Winchester opened its doors to the conference, the seed obscurely sown by the

meeting at Uppingham, had waxed a great tree, and fowls of the air, even those of the most ample pinion, were content to lodge under its shadow.

Assistant masters were made welcome to these meetings, but as guests only, and spectators. This restriction seemed to some people an anomaly, for it excluded able subordinates, who might be heirs presumptive to the great thrones, and admitted the tetrarchs of little principalities, hardly known beyond their shire or borough. Revolution did raise its head, but the founder was dour in resistance, maintaining that the difference was vital between the man who was, and the man who was not, responsible for his school. He won the day for his principle, and the heirs presumptive mostly stayed away. There were enough however who had stomach for this anomaly to accompany their chiefs to the tournament, and Thring was as numerously followed as any by retainers anxious, in the naughtiness of their hearts, to see him break a lance among his peers. Perhaps they had qualms of genuine anxiety as to how he might show on the open arena. They came away satisfied that be his equals who they might be, his like at any rate was not among them. There might be found a mellower eloquence, a more delicate humour, more clear-

headed logic, and versatility in debate; but the separateness of character was as visible, in the throng of equals, as when, in his own kingdom, it had impressed us as boys. If I try to give a name to this separateness, I should describe it as social independence. Other speakers, however convinced or self-confident, are felt to be in some relation to their environment: in the accent, as well as in the expression, there is recognition of the strength of opponents and the doubts of followers, there is a fending off of avoidable collisions by understatement, or compliment, or irony, chivalrous salvoes and amenities before the crossing of swords, and an undertone of depreciation, which whispers, while the formal argument proceeds, "do not think me naive, or impulsive, or narrow, or enthusiastic." That is because the orator's function is commonly to persuade. But it is the preacher's to prophesy, and, when Thring joined the debate there was no more reference to the surrounding mental climate than in a voice crying in the wilderness, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. The nature of the theme made little difference; whether he were defending the purity of the constitution, or the educational usefulness of Latin verses, whether he were describing the best way of keeping out

Government inspectors, or of spending Sunday afternoon at school, it was all one. The report given by a witness of one of these scenes, would hold good for all: "A—— said this, and B—— said that, and then Thring got up and talked like an archangel."

How he appeared to the conference my memories do not authorize me to say. But it was clear that he met with deference on all hands, and on many sides with cordiality, sometimes where least expected. Still, even from what has been said, it will be guessed that at the conference he was not wholly at home. He believed that, by advanced sections there, he was voted a reactionary. "It seems odd, considering all that has happened, that I should be looked on as an old fogey; but that's the case." Whether it really was so, and whether, if so, his conservatism was to blame for it, I cannot determine. Tendencies of thought, however, had, I imagine, less to do with the uncongeniality, than the social independence which I have referred to as his characteristic note in debate. He was not made for conferences. He floated in their element, not soluble. It is often the way with heroes: they will not mix. With his explosive moral earnestness, his hatred of compromise, his want of give and take

in discussion, his frequently mystifying paradox, he must have been, upon committees, "a shape to haunt, to startle, and waylay" the cheerful path of smooth business. But we were not behind the scenes, and what have we to do with guessing?

Yet this is not all guesswork. We were soon to have some little constitutional experiences of our own, at Uppingham. To these the new scheme, under the Endowed Schools Act, introduced us. This Act affected us as it affected no other school. Till the scheme was passed, Thring could correctly describe himself (in language, however, which galled some of our prouder sensibilities) as "the owner of the biggest private school in England." "*L'école c'est moi*," he might have uttered, as a constitutional, no less than a moral truth. These rights of his the State "confiscated," though it was a confiscation not without his own consent, when it handed over the finance to the new governing body of Trustees. The resettlement gave rise to numerous legal questions, very thorny, into which a biographer may enter if he list. I lack the materials as well as the desire, and confine myself to a single episode. We were called on to elect two representatives of the body of masters, to serve on the board of Trustees, headmaster and staff to

vote jointly for the two. This arrangement had been made, by the headmaster's own preference of it to an alternative—the election of one trustee by the assistant masters, and the nomination of another by himself. It was a wise, but a perilous preference, for by placing the two parties for the moment upon a constitutional equality, it intruded the maxims of one polity into the sphere of another, with results which, for the moment, were embarrassing. The election of a particular pair of representatives was judged by the headmaster, and rightly judged, as experience showed, necessary to the successful development of the school under his ideas. In this judgment, however, many of his assistants went only half-way. To go only so far was, he argued, and again I say rightly, to go no part of the way at all. Still there was no longer the assistant master, but the British citizen to deal with, armed with his vote, his responsibility, and his independence. A leader, with the constitutional order of mind, would have felt that, however much an unwise vote might imperil his policy and the state, still the best part of leadership at such a juncture was persuasion. He would have praised opponents for their excellent conscience, and suggested that even they might sink their better

judgments, in deference to his expressed inability to steer the ship without this concession : he would have made their compliance a gracious act, and drawn them in his train with cords of a man. If our election went right, it was not through the application of these arts ; it was saved, but so as by fire. Need we grudge to admit that our leader had not the constitutional order of mind ? It was a weakness, no doubt, a weakness rooted in his great qualities, but still a defect of them, and, in the field of action, his chief disablement. But it should not be ignored, for without it he cannot be interpreted.

BORTH.

Lead on, strong heart, lead on untiring still,
Though the day darkens, and a wearier war,
Wave after bitter wave, comes rolling far,
From seas undrainable of wasteful ill.
But thou lead on: thou shalt not vainly spill
Thy heart's dear blood, but, fast as hate can mar,
It quickens, fallen where God's harvests are,
Round happier dwellings which thy children fill.
Lead on; watch out the last, the blindest fight;
Watch out the trouble to watch in the weal,
This one last hour of battle: even now
Perchance, above us, from his vantage height
The angel watcher marks the foeman reel
And sets the trumpet to his lips to blow.

Nov. 29, 1876.

CHAPTER VI.

BORTH.

HAD it not been for the long war with Endowed Schools Commissioners, the first half of the decade from 1870 to 1880 would have been highly prosperous, and featureless. Far behind our backs lay the years of obscurity and struggle, the years of venture, with their pains, and their raptures, when the morning mail-bag was opened by the occupant of the Schoolhouse with anxieties, which find an allusion in a book * of his at this period, when "a boy was a boy," and each term's little increment of numbers was a new course laid in the rising fabric, when the months kept pouring in their little runlets of freshening change—a new master added, or a new department, a new house built or beginning, a plan drawn for school buildings, or a subscription list put out. Edward

* *Education and School.*

Thring had succeeded, and succeeded too well. The "blank sunshine" of success lay on his work, and made people blind to its merits. The public saw in it a new public school, with very sensible and comfortable arrangements, and a capital man at the head of it. His colleagues, or many of them, saw in it an effective machine, which did high credit to its inventor, and which they doubted his power of improving further. His boys thought that Uppingham was so nearly like "any other big school," that it was a pity it was not quite so. "I perish by this people which I made" is the experience of many kings, and was becoming his. Of his "efforts to found a better school life than it had been his own lot to know," there was the scantiest recognition. That perhaps mattered little, for he *had* founded it. The whole public school life of England had felt his impulse. He was consulted at the foundation of new schools, and principles adopted from him, though with a reserve of public acknowledgment which his friends viewed with some regret. But, with or without acknowledgment, the educators of the country were learning from him, that school must really train every boy whom it professes to train, the unpromising as honestly as the gifted, must keep

masters enough to teach him, and provide the structure and machinery which make a sound moral life easy and natural for the average boy in the society of many. Elementary truths enough, but which needed a discoverer. Discoveries are sometimes contested claims. We do not know if this is likely to be among them. It will be time to reconsider his discoverer's rights, when we have heard of any one else who had embodied these truths in a large school of his own creation, and given them to the public in a well-known book, years before they were practised elsewhere, or professed.

Thus he had had two successes; he had erected Uppingham, and he had leavened English education. The first work was visible, but he had no great pleasure in it, and, if he was praised, it was on the wrong grounds. The second work was still invisible even to himself, but it was the work, in which, alone, he would have seen of the travail of his soul.

Still Uppingham, however little it might command his heart, was about to make the heaviest claims upon his head and hand. The storm of the commission had hardly spent itself, when the "second woe" came rolling in upon us. In the later summer

of 1875, at the season when the health of schoolboys, fresh from the long summer holiday, is most vigorous, a mysterious malaise invaded some of the boarding-houses, droves of little boys especially creeping listlessly about "like flies in autumn." Presently a few were alarmingly ill, and (slower perhaps than should have been the case) it became clear that we were drinking poisoned wells, and an epidemic of typhoid was upon us. The panic, which began outside the school, and under which parents were telegraphing for their sons, the headmaster answered characteristically, and, in our then ignorance of what we really had to deal with, wisely enough. He put out a circular, giving reasons for not breaking up the school. The structure of the school, he said, with its separated houses, made isolation easy: it was wrong to send infection into the homes, and through the country, and that to the parents' additional cost: and it was bad to teach the young to run away from illness. The circular went on to define under what circumstances boys should be allowed to leave any particular house infected, but "nothing is likely," he thought, "to occur, to overthrow the experience I have now had of twenty-two years, that the school can be carried on safely, even in the worst

years of epidemic." At any rate "*we* shall not, in any instance, leave our posts. As long as any boys remain to be taught, we shall remain to take care of them." Brave words, though, for the occasion, too brave. He had spoken them years before, and ridden out a storm upon them. It could not be done this time, and the old experience played him an ill turn. Time was lost through it, and obloquy incurred. Parents were wroth at a rumour, that he had told the boys they would be "cowards and deserters," if they asked their parents to take them away. I do not know if the words were used ; the rumour sounds like a true one, and I find no reason why I should defend him against the charge of telling his boys they must play the man in danger. But he did not know what was before him. There was a death, and a second, and a third ; and the first days of November saw the school dismissed.

Three months it was kept away, and sanitation did its very best upon the boarding-houses. That was little good. Municipal Uppingham refused to amend or to avow its uncleanliness. Rural sanitary authority, to serve inscrutable ends, persecuted us with a war of words,—letters in the papers, sarcastic articles on the comparative value of hygiene and "longs and shorts," pamphlets, and inspectors'

reports. We dug on, for the most part silent, whatever our Sanballats might say, though once or twice a letter did escape us. Then at January's end we called the boys back. There was a moment's cheerfulness, to see the tide flow again in the forlorn streets. Three weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon's walk, Thring, speaking of some improvements which he hoped to see in the schoo organization, dropped his voice to add, "if we are allowed to go on working together." Next morning cleared up the hint. The fever was among us again Whose drains were wrong this time? we asked the town, and it was their turn to be dumb. But conscious innocence, though it sweetens disaster, cannot avert it. If it was our townsmen who poisoned us, it was ourselves who would be ruined. Two removes were likely to be as bad as a fire for house masters of Uppingham. How many parents would give us a third trial? Then some one spoke the right word. "Don't you think we ought to flit? The school can't stay here: let's take it somewhere else." It was a spark on tinder. "It is a big thing," thought we. "And I'll do it," said the chief.

Reader, you perhaps have never spent four or five months watching your fortunes crumble to pieces, while you asked help of local authorities

and got vituperation ; while at the doors of metropolitan departments you waited on the law's delays ; while scribblers in county journals vented an ancient spleen in rancid jokes, and you bit your tongue ; while you could neither do anything, nor make others do it, though a child could see what wanted doing, but must dangle about in melancholy, malodorous streets, or daily tramp to the "borings" for news of clean water, to be daily disappointed ; and all this hateful while must watch an inglorious ruin drawing near and nearer, for hopes to which men had given the best of a life. Why, then, you may hardly guess, with what a bound of spirit we sprang at something to *do*.

It is Sunday, March 12th, a day of wild wind and pitiless snows, the heaviest of the season. That afternoon we are gathered, with thin ranks, for the last time together under our chapel roof. In a few hours more we shall separate, to meet no one certainly knows where. The eve of war is, in fiction and history, the hour of auguries. It was so now : and when there came in deep tones from the lectern the story of an exile, who at evening lighted on a certain place, and heard in dreams the promise "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into

this land," there were hands which turned the prayer-book's leaves to see if the fair-omened lesson were the reader's choice, or (as it did) stood so appointed in the calendar.

Next morning the hunt is up. One trusted emissary was already waiting on the west coast, to report the results of a reconnaissance of likely spots for a settlement. Thring would join him and other friends there, for though sites on the east coast were also talked of, Wales was already in our minds the "safe harbour" of exiles. On the journey I remarked my chief's admirable gift, true accomplishment of great captains, of going off to sleep whenever he wanted. He had had good need of the gift for some bitter months. The wind was blowing fresh from the Lancashire coast when he woke and fell to talking. Full of elation he was with the twofold delight of battle and of freedom. This projected deportation was no "Babylonish captivity" to him, not a bit; it was escape from "the bondage of local self-misgovernment at Uppingham." Hopes rose in him that tables would be turned on obstructives and calumniators, and hostile authorities, "rural" and others, have to answer for the circumstances which had driven us out of house and home. These hopes were not his

own solitary and sanguine fancies only; but they were not realized, or realized very imperfectly.

Then again, in the very worst event, publicity would be some consolation even if the venture failed. The "fierce light of calamity" would be a justifying light for us. It is human to wish not to die in the dark; *ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον.*

One other thought came to sweeten the cup of exile. The venture, which would discomfit foes, might do something also to unite friends. Something it had done. There was but one mind in the camp when the word was given to march.

The headmaster had proposed his plan. "I want to dismiss the school for a three weeks' holiday, and then call it together on some healthy spot, by the sea if possible, which we must find and get ready for them in that time. You all see the risks and the responsibilities of the venture. Will you take them?" And his men said "Ay, Ay!"

The Governing body of Archdeacon Johnson's school did not say "Ay," nor did they say "No." It was their complaint, later, that they were not asked to say either, till after the step had been decided on and announced. To this it must be answered, first, that the headmaster acted with the fullest concurrence of certain members of the board,

whose concurrence was the most important. Next, that for a fighting general, at a real pinch, the very best moment of all for consulting a council of war is, if proverbs be trusted, the moment *after* he has decided to fight. Last, that when the board did meet four days later than our resolve, it said the school might go from Uppingham, but declined to express an opinion as to whether it should go anywhere else. The argument for this policy of masterly reserve ran, if rumour reports correctly, thus :—"We are trustees of Archdeacon Johnson's school at Uppingham; but the Welsh coast is not in Uppingham; therefore if the school goes to Wales, it is not Archdeacon Johnson's school at Uppingham; therefore we cannot know anything about it till it comes back." Neat and syllogistic. In fact, our protecting providence was like the native gods whom a sea-sick Hindoo declined to invoke, because they were strictly local deities, and "no use at all here on the sea."

Thus, to our valour, the board of trustees added valour's better part. The board, I say. On that council were two men whom "masterly reserve" did not content. They were the two representatives of the masters, whom, as noted in the last chapter, a dubious, but well-inspired election had

secured. They discharged their trust with right north-country thoroughness; heart and soul they plunged into the enterprise with us, spent on it time and strength ill spared from a busy life, were at hand in every crisis of it, and saw it through to the happy ending. Those who honour the friend in need may care to read their names.[1]

We will not go on to tell the tale of Uppingham by the sea, for besides that we once already have attempted that task, its details lie outside our present undertaking. Still one may come a dozen years later and glean where one has reaped, especially in a field where we were compelled to "let fall some of the handfuls of purpose," because the harvest was in part too new to garner.

First of all, it was exhilarating to see Edward Thring verify our boyish comment on him, of "What a soldier you would make!" It was a campaigner's work he had taken on his

[1] The trustees to whom the school's gratitude is due for their help at this crisis were Mr. T. H. BIRLEY, of Manchester, and Mr. W. T. JACOB, of Liverpool. Here, too, it is convenient to acknowledge the success with which the Rev. R. J. HODGKINSON maintained the Lower School without infection in its isolated quarters, keeping the sacred fire alight on the altar of the tribe until our return to his side. The Rev. W. CAMPBELL should not be forgotten as the first, to my knowledge, to say out aloud, "Let us flit." Nor will those who honour the acceptance of weary and ungrateful labours for the common good, forget Mr. C. COBB's management of our commissariat on the campaign, or the services of Mr. S. HASLAM.

hands; to find a position, and pitch a standing camp, and provision an army, and all in three weeks. It was done, punctual as if he had been a Wolseley. Borth, a fishing village in Cardigan Bay, with its big empty hotel and speculative lodging houses, was chosen for the site, two days after his start from Uppingham. Ten days later, a goods train unloaded there the movables of 300 boys and their masters. In a week more he had equipped the establishment of a large public school, ready, in all essentials, to open at once. Whoever will look into the details will justify his description of it, as a "fierce piece of work." He did it in the absence of special aptness or experience, by pure "go." Down he comes upon a babel of eager Welshmen, making hay on Borth platform of our mattresses and blankets. "That won't do: this is the way of it"—drills the confusion, and earns a porter's wage himself at the same time. Up he goes to mine host's vacant stories. "What! No jugs and basins to be got? Telegraph, man, telegraph to the potteries, they *must* be here the day after to-morrow."—"Nobody to joint the bedsteads, and stitch the curtains? Oh, my ladies will do all that."—"What! can't possibly get any hands to plaster that filthy top floor ceiling? Rubbish! I'm

off to Aberystwith. I'll find them ; they'll be here this afternoon."—"Hospital did you say? Why, yes, of course we shall want a hospital. Well, you and I, A. will have a walk round the farmhouses, after lunch, and look one out."—"Music rooms, Mr. B.? Certainly, you must have music rooms: there's the coast guardsman, and the church clerk, and the Primitive Methodist minister, all glad to take in a piano. Studies for boys? That's a big order—never mind, there are some dear old Welshwomen say they can let the boys have the front kitchen, and keep their family in the washhouse."

The soldier's heart is ever tender towards womankind. This the dear old Welshwomen found out. Still we can see the features of the coaxing Mrs. David Jones as she follows him to the door after bargain struck, and, while we are sourly drawing the purse strings, pats him on the back fondlingly, and wheedles "Won't you give just a little more?—poor widow, Meester Thring, poor widow!"

The race against time was won. It had seemed impossible, and some of us urged him to postpone the arrival of the school, but he made it a point of honour to keep his date, and kept it. When the boys had poured in, he called them together, and harangued them. "You are on a campaign, you

must play the soldier, and put up with hardship without grumbles. Remember, you are making history ; this is a great experiment, and perhaps others will, some day, imitate it : show them how to do it." Five minutes of him got their blood up. What is more wonderful, he kept it up through all privations, dulness, and annoyances, to the long year's end : this was an achievement for which time does not lessen our admiration. King of boys he was, past question.

Children make better picnickers than older folk. Inferior victuals, and a makeshift dinner equipage have their delights for them, under the greenwood tree. Let this be the reason why magnanimity, under the abridgment of comforts, was more buoyant and universal among the boys than among their elders. The fact might be spared as irrelevant, if candour did not bind us to admit this qualification of Thring's success as leader of a colony. Here, I cannot but think, an opportunity was missed. We hoped, some of us, that the struggle to avert a common ruin would knit up a union of hearts, and the fire of enthusiasm for an intelligible cause, in most intelligible peril, burn up the rubbish of old disagreements ; that happened in part, but only in small part. Perhaps opportunities are generally

lost beforehand, and the Welsh chapter came too late in Uppingham history. Even so, and whatever may have been wanting on the other side, one may still wish that the art had been his to appeal to his shepherds as he had to the flock, and make them follow him as gladly. Well, all successes pay some toll to Nemesis. He paid this.

* * * * *

We came to Borth for a term, we remained a year. This was not our wayward truancy. We could not go home till the reasons for our leaving home were removed, and we hoped our migration would supply a motive for action to the powers who minister to rural health. Now see to thine own house, O rural sanitary authority! The motive operated very slowly, but when people sickened and died in Uppingham, and there was no school there to be charged with infecting them, except the isolated Lower School, which in its re-sanitated premises enjoyed admirable health, conviction, arrived at logically by the methods of Agreement and Difference, and, more effectively by the presence of an inspector from London, stole upon the rural sanitary mind, and in its wake came pick and shovel. Until this point was carried, the authorities of the school were still treated as con-

tentious persons, who troubled the peace of Uppingham. One would like to quote Æsop here, only that the person who would have to play the lamb to some one's wolf, is one on whom the part seems to sit uncongenially. Instead of Æsop then, I quote Edward Thring's review, in a private letter, of his relations to disputants:—"I am quite in the dark as to what you mean [he refers to a complaint of his pugnacity]. From the very beginning we have had but one attitude. At first, we applied to the rural authority. Then, when we found a fierce onslaught on us begun, instead of help, we appealed to the Local Government Board. Both by embassy and in private, we have again and again reiterated our readiness to co-operate in any *movement.* I have steadily forbidden any recrimination, or answer in print, to any of the vituperation poured on us. I have also discouraged, as far as possible, any talk. We have simply, in word and deed, fled from all attack, and shown readiness to act, if any action was begun by them. We have no power in the place, which [the place] we wish to rouse, nor do we think it wise to endeavour to agitate. It has suited the people, who act for Uppingham, to represent us as hostile, but it would be difficult for them to show that we have done anything hostile. As is generally

the case when a great wrong is done by people in power, they are lavish of their accusations.

"My one answer is, 'Why are we at Borth if we are powerful or pugnacious?' People are not turned out of house and home, and brought face to face with ruin for their own amusement, or if they mean to resist."

The letter is not cited by us to justify his part in a village brawl about bad smells, and that more than a dozen years old, but because it describes, characteristically and sincerely, what had been on this and on other occasions, his rule and practice. The charge of pugnacity is among vulgar errors. We will not say he was a stranger to the stern joy which warriors feel. He was right, when he remarked of himself upon some one threatening to take a high line with him, "Let him try it: Scots play best at the roughest game"; and every one must enjoy a game he plays at well. But he sincerely, and with conspicuous self-control, avoided battles where he thought he could, and this, not for the politician's reason, that enmities obstruct business, but on a more moral ground. He believed that truth prevailed, not by hostilities, but by doing her own work. "Never attack," was one of his favourite maxims when he talked with

young men. That he acted on it himself is demonstrable.

This is not to say that he had also the arts and the temperament which disarm hostility beforehand, or the *suaviter in modo* which mitigates a war, when unavoidable.

Nor is it to say that he lacked shrewdness in the conduct of diplomacy. We have heard it alleged, as if it were a discredit to his simplicity, that he was, on occasion, an adroit tactician. The allegation itself we admit freely. He had some brains.

* * * * *

For himself, we incline to think that the year of exile was the happiest of his four-and-thirty years of school work. It was full of acute anxieties, for it was on a precarious tenure that we held our ground at Borth, and there were periods of sharpest overstrain; but then we were on an ennobling venture; we should fall, if we fell, gloriously, and we did not think we should fall. There was also a fairly continuous struggle with the dilatory masters of sanitary things at Uppingham; but then they were at Uppingham and he was not, and that made the difference; distance altered the climate for him; he could breathe. "It is curious," he said, of another occasion, "how the venom diminishes

with the miles." Besides, the change of physical, as well as of moral scene, was bringing him new vitality. Wandering under the sand-dunes at the Dovey's mouth, and beating out his *Borth Lyrics* to music of waves, with now and then a tramp among the bracken of an inland valley, he got back much of his lost health. Sea breezes must not claim all the credit of this. We give it to elbow room. When memory sees him roaming on those broad sands, rapt as Homer, with miles of solitary space about him, and then recalls a like, but unlike, figure doggedly footing a little country town street, with the iron and contracted air of a man whose enemy may be round the very next corner, one knows what it was that brought tone back to body and spirit. Then what neighbours he had, from the land-owner to the fisherman, were friends. The simple folk of the village, like simple people everywhere, were delighted with him, and mothers christened their children after him. He felt himself like the Irish hero in the Bounteous Isle "For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green isle was our own." Ah! no, there was just one neighbour who offered to jostle him—claimed to block up a valued exit from our precincts. A claim not to be allowed. "Very well, Mr. B—, very well!

You may put the door up. I shall knock it down: some of these gentlemen will be very glad to do it for me!" We suppose his law was all right, for his opponent pushed his point no further—only paid him out, when next he had a lawsuit with some one else, by threatening him, in a busy hour, with a subpœna to attend as witness at a distant County Court. How genially this atmosphere of respect and friendliness, for which he had exchanged "those octopus suckers floating all round him" at home, affected his mood, may be compactly indicated by an anecdote. "Hullo! Mr. Bursar," he exclaimed, late one night, at the foot of the hotel staircase, wrinkling one expressive feature, as there was borne to it a certain dry fume, which was always, to him, an incense of abominable things, "what's this? Some one is smoking—in the hotel!" Mr. Bursar pleads that good old hard-worked R—, when the last room is swept, has got nowhere else to smoke his pipe in, but the kitchen. "Ah! yes. All right: then I haven't smelt it." And he goes off to bed smiling.

I remember to have specially felt the touch of this new buoyancy of spirit, in a conversation with him, as we walked by the shore on one of the later days of our sojourn. Speaking of some difficulties, not

yet surmounted, he fell to contrasting with them the painful experiences of his first years at Uppingham; *then* there had been the debt, incurred to make his experiment possible, there had been the fear of failure, of seeming to acquaintance and kin to have made a miserable mistake, and, far worse than that, of discrediting truth, by the miscarriage of the plans which were to prove it. The troubles of the late crisis had been far easier to bear; "There is the satisfaction of feeling that all these twenty-three years of fruitful work lie behind me—safe; if I were to fail now, ever so much, nothing could touch that; the past is past, that cannot be lost." This gave him a repose and freedom of mind about the future, except, indeed, he added, as concerned his own family fortunes. "But," he went on, "I believe there is plenty of work before me yet. Why else is it I have got my health back so curiously,—health I have never had all my working life? And then, too, I feel I have learnt so much from this time. The compression of circumstances has driven in, and compacted what was loose and weak in me; I am just fitted for good work now."

And there were still ten good years of it, between him and the grave.

He was not quite so certain *where* that good work was to be done. There were moments, in the secret history of this time, when he entertained in seriousness the question of making his migration permanent, and starting on a fresh career as founder, in virgin soil. This was when the Uppingham knots seemed to defy unravelment. He had gone so far as to communicate with friends who would have backed the enterprise, and to fix his eye on the spot (not Borth) which should be the site of his New Salamis. The project was not fantastic. The thing could have been done by him, and he would have delighted in doing it. Of all who would have joined in it, he was the one who would have snapped the ties of home with the lightest heart. Uppingham, as so much stone and mortar, was nothing to him. A few years ago no doubt, before the wind of disaster got up, he had been fond of quoting from "Winstanley," as the motto of his own feeling for his Uppingham work, then threatened, as he thought, not by fever, but by process of law :—

> "*But if it fell, then this were well,*
> *That I should with it fall,*
> *Since, for my part, I have built my heart*
> *In the courses of its wall.*"

But the hours had brought him new thoughts, or rather, as I think, had brought back his oldest thoughts. The wall he had reared was "not of this building," and therefore could be reared again and elsewhere. Yet the time for that was not come. Besides, he was, now, as many years younger in heart and body, as he was older by the calendar. No need yet for Winstanley to "set with his pilot star."

VIRGIN SOIL.

CHAPTER VII.

VIRGIN SOIL.

We returned to Uppingham in May, 1877, fourteen months after our exodus. We came back to an Uppingham much changed, above ground, as well as under. Distance had lent us endearment, and our re-entry was an ovation. The horses were unyoked from the coaches outside the town, and the freight of boys hauled by the hands of townsmen up the street, under triumphal arches of greenery, enscrolled with mottoes of welcome and union. An address of sympathy was presented to the headmaster and his staff, in an historic scene, now blazoned on the great window of the schoolroom, under which it was enacted. As a yet more material guarantee of reciprocal good offices in the future, the Mutual Improvement Society, an institute which provided for the higher civilization of Uppingham, changed its government, and in-

vited the headmaster to preside. He accepted the call, and began a little chapter in his life, in which his most genial and effective qualities were displayed on a new theatre.

He conceived of his duties with his wonted comprehensiveness and magnanimity. Here was come to his hands a leverage, by which he might raise the whole social life of his neighbours. Nothing less should be aimed at. Music, literature, art, gymnastics, horticulture, cuisine, amusement, should all take service under him, and he would organize the social well-being of townspeople, as he had already organized it for schoolboys.

This sounds grand language; but that is only because the operations were within the compass of a petty market town, of not three thousand souls, and you cannot get up a high tide in a saucer. Within this compass, however, he did so much that one regrets he could not have given ten years to animating the citizen life of some large provincial town. We think he would have put his stamp upon it as distinctly as he did upon his school.

First among the agencies of the society stood the music. This was already a plant of vigorous

growth, and the town choir, fortunate in the genius of their trainer, borrowed from our staff, could produce an oratorio very creditably. It throve more, however, under the new president. Of the art itself he understood nothing, and, except that it was remarked that, when he did express a preference, he showed a sense somewhere in him which discerned good work from bad, we need not demur to his profession of being unable to know notes apart. But ignorance of the musical art, if profound and admitted, is a useful qualification in a patron, when enthusiasm is present. And for music he had a most steadfast enthusiasm. He saw with clearness its value as drill, as a discipline in concerted action, as "a common language" uniting varied grades of social and mental culture, and he divined its emotional potency. Accordingly, long ago, when his school was just rising, and while in most English circles music was voted an effeminacy for boys, he had fostered, by little drawing-room gatherings, the humble beginnings of a school choir, which in time attained pre-eminence. And so now, under his patronage, and through the work of the artists on his staff, the town music had its time of bloom, and quickened into emulation the less vigorous associations of its neighbour towns.

By time-honoured connection, music suggests gymnastics. This branch of education was likely to flourish under Thring. He founded new cricket and football clubs, laid down a ground for them at his own cost, and blessed their banners in inaugural speeches, which eulogized the good fellowship of English sports, and the worth of physical training. He did not stop at this conventional limit, but tried to provide physical training for others than the young men. He worked hard, but unsuccessfully, to secure a recreation ground, or people's park, and, that project breaking down, secured a playing field for the boys and girls, to keep them from the street; and founded a lawn tennis club, for the special benefit of the daughters of tradesmen. This is a class which gets but little of the bodily exercise for which our country takes, on the strength of the habits of a class, too much credit; and it was an instructive sight, as well as a comical, to watch a dignitary of nearly sixty summers, and somewhat lame, giving their first lesson in activity of limb to a class of these girls. He had them ranged in a row before him, a racquet in each unaccustomed hand, winnowing the air in imitation of him, as he put them through a manual exercise, designed by him to supple shoulder joint

and elbow and train them to the necessary stroke. The club, shared in and presided over by ladies of the school, bore the name of "The Grasshoppers." Some young men were also admitted by introduction, and distinguished as "Locusts." High seriousness was, as will have been seen, the note of this, as of all his undertakings. It was a seriousness which went hand in hand with a good animal heartiness and even joviality, but which now and again laid on lesser things an emphasis which was droll. There comes back to me the scene on a présentation of a testimonial to an officer of one of the clubs. There is the damp meadow, the group of flannelled and ulstered players in sombre expectancy, the subject of the testimonial a pace in advance of them, conscious that his flannels, soiled with a football match, do not harmonize with the dignity of the moment, and drooping a bared head, in pale dejection, towards the president, who is reciting over it, in tones which awe the blood, the services of this gentleman, moral and social, to the cause of athletic fraternity. And, as the scene proceeds, I recognize that I have witnessed it somewhere before. That "somewhere" is the sketch by our military artist at the seat of war. It is a Prussian officer examining a suspected spy.

True to the duty, which he much insisted on, of helping the people to amuse themselves, he became master of the ceremonies for the town "feast-week." This festival had derived a certain saturnalian flavour from the race meeting which used to signalize it; a very minor one indeed (to be quite plain, they raced ponies), but held to be not improving. The holiday was now sweetened by substituting a flower show for the ponies. The president worked hard at all the details. He was in his glory, and, as was certain, had an indefeasible and solely conceivable principle for the arrangement of flower and fruit tents, to maintain against committeemen of little faith. Principle or no, the practice was excellent. The show was spread on the school cricket field, and tennis courts measured out in the open, to which large patrols of ground stewards invited the public; and it was pretty to watch the figure of a genial navvy, whose knotty limbs wielded a racquet much as Hercules might the fan of Omphalé, and who murmured gently, over his ill-directed blows, "There ain't no weight in these here balls." A greensward dance at night in conclusion of this entertainment, a concert on another evening, and a "president's cricket match" filled up the festival.

Winter had its own enterprises. It was the turn for the fireside, and Uppingham womanhood must next be taught to cook. He did not originate the movement, but he gave it its heart.

Cooking classes were organized, a professor was summoned from the nearest school of cookery, and appetising advertisements blew the trumpet before her. The M.I.S. threw open, to her battery of stoves, the doors of its lecture hall, and a leading butcher, appealed to for the material of a rarer delicacy (it was a heart), chivalrously answered that though he had it not, "he would kill a sheep on purpose, rather than let Miss L—go without." With a population ready for such sacrifices much can be effected. But the lady secretary informed us that it was the president who made the enterprise march. When a busy and dignified person, in late middle age, left his books or family fireside, and crossed a heavy snowfall to attend the penny night classes for artisans, who was going to be malingerer? The sight of the president, enchaired in the spectators' gallery, with his silver spoon ready on his knees, filled the house, in spite of weather. Lecture ended, and demonstration beginning, he would buy up the whole products of the evening, and send them round the audience for consumption, when the silver spoon

(he brought his own for example's sake) had first made probation and its owner looked happy over it. On the first of these evenings, he delivered an inaugural speech, of which terse fragments linger still in the memories of Rutland mothers. "Man, is the bread-winner: woman ought not to be the bread-waster." "There is no more reason why a poor man should eat a vile potato, than why a rich man should eat a vile potato." This heartiness and gusto took the people greatly. "I like to hear *him*," the neighbours commented, "he says, a man's a man to me and a woman's a woman." To continue the enthusiasm, prizes were offered for the best cottage dinners, to be produced at a cost of fourpence, and the president, with two assessors, held a perambulatory assize, and pronounced judgment by assay between the giblet soup, and other country messes, of emulous housewives.

Art, and skilled handicraft, were not forgotten, though here there were narrow limits of the possible. Drawing classes were offered, however, and a sensible encouragement given by the exhibition of handiwork at the Christmas soirée, to which he used to call his townsmen. Drawings or needlework, carpentry and cookery, anything an Uppingham hand had produced, were welcomed, and a

loan collection of pictures or curiosities was levied to swell the show.

Of literature we have but a conventional tale to tell. There was of course an essay prize, and it was a woman who, with us, anticipated the University triumphs of her sex, by winning the palm. A course of drawing-room lectures on the best classics was opened, but languished, through the rarity, here as elsewhere, of the true literary mind. Public lectures throve better, and we remember that the president hit the popular taste well, in one of his own, on facial expression. Then there was the elocution class for men, a department older than our revival. Here, at least, literature escaped conventionality, through an entanglement with human passion. First, there had been a brawl, which furnished the occasion for the change of government in which the revival began, over the question of a dramatic representation in costume. Then the less piquant recitations, to which, by an organic law against costume, we were now confined, would be distracted by the wrongs and resentments of 'prentices, who could not find themselves fitted with any but the leading parts. Worse still, one promising play was wrecked, when, at a late stage of its preparation,

one section of the cast was found unable to take the stage, because they were under restraint, for disorder on a Guy Fawkes night or other unblessed carnival, and another, because they were in burning popular disfavour for contributing to their captivity. Besides the incidence of these external shocks, the teachers of the class were embarrassed between their proper function of instructing their pupils in the arts of articulation, emphasis, aspiration, and the exacting demands upon time made by the dramatic entertainments. In these entertainments there was again the problem where to choose, between those forms of literature which pleased the groundlings and filled the society's exchequer, and those which elevate the taste and discipline the emotions. The happiest compromise effected was when two gifted swains enacted the gravedigger scene from *Hamlet*, and shovelled up real mould, and a *bonâ fide* cranium (lent by the doctor) from under two lifted planks of the platform: no reality of accent, air, or humour was lacking: it was pure nature, but then it was Shakespeare too! We were not always so prosperous. Among us was an idealist, who was not content, and stirred us to a disastrous ambition. "Don't you think we ought to aim higher? Some of us who understand the thing,

should get up a few of the finer scenes from Shakespeare, and give the people an idea of real serious drama." A proposal so accordant with our president's aims won our assent. We chose the scenes of the ghost's appearances from *Hamlet*, and gave our idealist the leading part. The ghost was the difficulty. On our stage, and under the no-costume law, he could not be personated. He must be left to the imagination, and our skilful acting should eke out that faculty in the audience. On the night, the stage-manager, as usual, prefaced the performance by a friendly explanation of the plot. We had not, he said, quite rivalled the adventurous manager, who presented the play of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet left out; but we came near him; we were giving the ghost scenes with the ghost left out; he hoped however that, if the kind audience would follow attentively the expression and gesture of the players, they would be able to detect the moment, and the place, of the supernatural entry, and feel the proper sentiment of mystery and awe. A pleased murmur from the back benches welcomed these remarks, and Hamlet in the side scenes muttered to Horatio, "Confound him! he's making a joke of it." Serious drama took the boards with misgivings. All went well, however, with the sen-

tinels on the battlements, until their start and scared gestures indicated that the ghost was dodging the partizan of Marcellus. Then the gallery exploded in a rapture of merriment. How the scene ended, we cannot recall: but Hamlet, in the slips, and the president, in the front seat, looked Tragedy itself. However, the quiet conference of Hamlet and Horatio in the palace, restored to drama some of her seriousness. Hamlet had next to come on the terrace himself, and when "the swaggering up-spring reels" of the wicked king's orgy was announced, by a blare of the M.I.S. brass band, from an ambush outside the window, nerves were tickled afresh. But, when his great moment came, and he had thrown himself into a lion-like pose for "Angels and ministers of grace, defend us" one delirious cachinnation swept the whole hall, except two silent front benches of culture. Hamlet's voice hung suspended in petrifying despair, and there broke in, instead, that of the president, risen to his feet, and pleading with indignation's most reproachful accent, "For heaven's sake, if you can't enjoy it yourselves, do let others do so, who can!" They couldn't resist that, and the real serious drama got somehow finished in quiet.

But there was something odd in the conjuration "If you can't enjoy it yourselves!" Heavens! did they not?

The president's lieutenants were not often so unlucky, and his tenure of office lifted out of itself and vitalized the inert little market town, mind and character together. Some of its effects, at any rate the interchange of good offices between school and town, are, one may hope, permanent. But the law of inertia, which operates against progress more surely on small areas, asserted itself on his retirement. That was too inevitable to be regretted. One can only be sorry, to repeat a remark made earlier, that his stimulating and resourceful character, with its capacity for popular effect, could not operate on a wider and more conspicuous field, and gain permanence at least by its example.

A DECADE.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DECADE.

We return to the current of affairs within the school. After the *Annus Mirabilis* at Uppingham-by-the-Sea, it was required by the balance of human things that there should be no very stirring events for another decade. A little sheaf of such doings as illustrate the character of our story's hero shall be bound up in a single chapter.

First there was the founding of an anniversary, the celebration by a special service of the year at Borth.

Probably not even outsiders will require any apology for our wish to make so much of an incident so exceptional. Admiration for the achievement was never grudged. A stranger would always acknowledge that the migration was "an uncommon plucky thing," never anything like it, he should say; ruminating the while on the nuisance it was to find

lodging and occupation for his three boys and other belongings last year at Great Dippington; and then, by a feat of mental arithmetic, multiplying that nuisance by one hundred, to cast the sum of our miseries. That product, however, gives no measure of the sentiments with which we viewed the event from within. For sympathies with these we would rather make appeal to those readers who have ever tried the imaginative exercise of transcribing some powerful work of fiction into the terms of a newspaper paragraph, on a "Domestic Tragedy in Little Blankton." These readers we would ask to invert the process, and translate the beggarly elements of our story back into the romance of the hearts, by which its phases were feared and endured. To the actors in that story it was one of deliverance from the ruin of their personal fortunes, so far as engaged in Uppingham. "In one week's time this school, would have come to an end" was a vigorous way Thring had of putting it, and it was perfectly accurate. To conjecture what would have been the future of Archdeacon Johnson's grammar-school, if we had not done what we did, is a task as idle as all attempts of historians to rewrite history on the basis of an "if." What can be certainly said of it beyond the incontestable

fact, that several men in middle age, with families, would have lost their capital and professional prospects, is this—that it would have been the future of Robert Johnson's grammar school, and not of Edward Thring's Uppingham. "I and many others," he said, "would never have set foot in this place again." If deliverances from material ills are subjects for litanies, our commemoration of having survived both the pestilence and the heroic remedy needs no justification.

But the chief actor, and all who felt with him, found another reason for a memorial rite. They saw in the great year an issue which was not personal. The calamity which had been as the sentence of death on the hopes which centred in Uppingham, had proved, or so we ventured to think, the birth-pang of a sounder life. It was an ordeal which the cause had endured. The cause which had passed through the fire and lived, must be as true as we had believed it.

Trial by ordeal is generally an appeal to faith. This of ours made also an appeal to reason. Not all the years of Thring's peaceful rule would have set the seal so firmly on the fine discipline which his system bred, as the one year of battle which it came through unshaken. When an army's

discipline holds fast under fire, the leader is no theorist.

This thought of a common life, reconsecrated by a delivering providence, gave wings to his speech, when he used to mount the pulpit on the yearly festival. "There was a day when our eyes looked on these great walls, and we doubted whether we should ever worship here again. Utter ruin had come, utter and absolute, to the life here. We had to go out; and in the sight of all the world, live or die, as a school. Few know, very few know, what it is, day by day, to see the giant, deadly force of irresistible, invisible ruin drawing closer and closer, and to look straight in the face of overwhelming evil power.

"There was a day when the school, here in this place, had come to an end, and when, unless the great venture came out right, all the life we had stored up here was lost, and the good cause, the cause of Christ, which had been our hope here, in striving to give each boy true justice in work, or play, 'none favouring, none forgetting', had perished from this hillside. You know it ended in deliverance. Lo! we are here to-day! Christ, the Deliverer, has delivered this school, and gave it safety at Borth in that dread year. Then, as

soldiers in the army of the living God, holding a life saved by a special deliverance such as has never happened to any school, at any time, we are bound to stand faithful and true."

At a meeting with a few of his colleagues to plan the proposed service, he showed himself in full character. There was piety salted with practical good sense, and reverence quaintly crossed with raciness. He was much pleased, to begin with, that the commemoration had been suggested by others than himself, and could not therefore be assigned to a "fad" of his. But this sympathy with his own feeling about the event did not tempt him to overdo effects. He checked the zeal of lieutenants who wanted to make the service strike too vivid a note—"No, no! *We* feel all that, no doubt; but we mustn't go beyond what people will feel years hence, or what most feel even now." He would not have Psalms of too jubilant a strain, and objected to the 126th which was proposed. "Turn our captivity" would not do for us: ours was not so complete a deliverance, for we had so much trouble still on hand. And there he somehow got off upon the Red Sea, and the Israelites, from whose history he was fond of drawing parallels to ours (the humorist had remarked "he thinks, you

know, the Exodus was just nothing to it,")—and said, with a phrase which will disguise from strange readers the utter seriousness of the manner, "True, it wasn't all over for them, either; the poor beggars had tightish work, you know, with all that wilderness life before them."

It is not given to all to study their Bible with the realism of a Covenanter.

Soon after this he launched another institution. Sitting, on a sunny Founder's day in 1878, with a group of his Old Boys between two of the chapel buttresses, he founded a society. The idea was to form an association of past members of the school, for mutual assistance in "good works." The fund raised by their subscriptions was to be employed in the sustentation of any philanthropic effort, religious or secular, in which a member was engaged. So far, it was a mutual benefit society, assisting its members in charitable enterprises. What was really aimed at, however, was the consolidation of the feeling among past Uppinghamians for the cause and spirit of the school. This was not to remain a vague, floating sentiment slowly evaporating. It was to be caught, condensed, and utilized as a practical force.

There was romance and there was good sense in this. But it did not grow to very much. Soon after it had passed out from between the chapel buttresses, it slipped into an ill groove and became a matter of dissidence. It struggled through this, with some exhaustion, into a quiet career, neither useless nor romantic.

Another Founder's day, some four years' later, saw some distinguished guests gathered in the school-room to celebrate its recent decoration. Our artist, Mr. C. Rossiter, had covered the interior with paintings, and the worthies of literature looked down as with the eyes of ancestors on Uppingham scholars. "Since the days of the painted porch in Athens, I doubt whether training has ever been installed more lovingly or more truly or in a worthier home," said Lord Carnarvon, who had given his graceful eloquence the task of the inauguration. Thring's idea in the decoration was practical. He did not see why education should be associated with grimness, or roughness, bare walls, hacked desks or ink-stains. Noble externals should give lessons their due honour. He had invited his guests to celebrate not a bit of refined extravagance, but an example of "the principle, that for good work you must have

right tools," that the material conditions are potent over the spiritual results. He spoke of it as "the festival of Honour to Lessons." He wrote a song to express the occasion; our minstrel set it to music, and well it went to it. It was an allegory, and he rhymed to a dull elf or two, who could not image to themselves its application to practice and were cynically proud of their incapacity. He had a short way with these. "Please, Mr. Thring," said one of them with sinister intention, "what *is* the 'Queen of Fairyland'?" Brief and stern was the rejoinder—"Lessons!"—with an intonation which plainly added, "Try what you can make of that." His questioner did not try.

Too soon, perhaps, after this we had to keep festival again. On Archdeacon Johnson's school-room stands carved the date 1584, and the third century had come round for commemoration. Our historical-minded age has distinguished itself by its zeal for centenaries, but this festival of ours was surely not idle. Nine generations, of thirty years, had passed over the Uppingham of its first founder: a tenth had just ended which was commensurate with the rule of a second founder. Surely it was a

time when we might pipe to our friends and expect them to dance.

Thring himself had no great desire for the celebration. With what was perhaps an unconscious prescience he hung back, till the strong wishes of the Old Boys drew him on. "If you really think it is a time to blow the trumpet," he said, "we must do it." Afterwards a meeting in London of representative old pupils cheered him with its evidence of heartiness, and he came back from it inspirited.

Preparations went forward. Invitations and subscription lists went round to the Uppingham world, and chief guests and speakers were selected. The exclusiveness (the word is not used in a bad sense) of Thring's mind came out in this choice. He was rightly jealous that the meaning of the feast should not be blurred by a conventional, undiscerning handling, and by the importation of ideas alien to the work, which, with sincerest reverence for the much longer past, we yet felt to be the main cause for pæans. He was therefore against seeking the countenance of eminent people, whose personalities would have adorned the feast, but whose voice would have struck the wrong note. I do not say he attained his end, but this was the aim. This exclusiveness, one side of his fidelity to principle,

was among the strongest forces of his nature, and it was of early growth. He once told me how in his earliest Uppingham days, he refused an introduction to a man of highest position, whose friendliness would have eased his difficulties at the vital point, because of a moral disapproval of his public attitude. The little Eton scholar had the same way already. "Soult was down at Eton, and was shaking hands with boys; but I wouldn't go near him. I wasn't going to shake hands with that old murderer."

The festival was laboriously organized. "Now I know," wrote a committee-man after the event was over, "now I know why no one who has taken part in one tercentenary ever lives to take part in another." No, indeed. The fatigues and disappointments of the first bring the grey hairs prematurely.

It is the tendency of a set celebration to disappoint feeling.

> "*We cannot kindle when we will*
> *The fire which in the heart resides.*"

And it seemed to us that the fire was not kindled here. The speeches on the day were in most cases (let us be grateful) worthy of their authors; they had wisdom, wit, eloquence, and number, but the

true matter of the celebration somehow escaped between them. When all was over, Uppingham had not spoken its "word." Perhaps it was a word which could not be uttered from the speaker's platform. The school music, whose part in our festivals was worthy of its history, hit the mark more clearly. Music was *our* art, the art in which by consent of generous rivals we were first. And it was our boys' voices, Paul David, as your wand led them down the flowing stream of your Tercentenary Cantata, and the stilled hall hung on the notes, moved beyond all wont, that breathed the right passion of the hour, and hymned the praise of Uppingham. That was well, for was not our polity like Merlin's fair city

> "*built*
> *To music; therefore never built at all,*
> *And therefore built for ever.*"

But this is to riddle like old Merlin, and we remember that he "angered" those who did not take in his parables.

To name the choir is to be reminded how, a few weeks before the tercentenary, we equipped an expedition to London to give an evening concert in the East End, where the school had started a

mission. A town mission is becoming a natural adjunct of a public school, but it is not always known that, here too, Thring led the way, and had his school mission seven years before the first of the other schools. There was his usual largeness of idea, with something superadded of the mobility, as strategists call it, acquired in 1876, in this picnic, with a party of seventy, some hundred miles out. We went again, but without him, a few months before his death.

Last of all his new things was the invitation he gave to the headmistresses of the high schools and others, to hold their yearly conference at Uppingham, the guests of himself and his masters, whose hospitable support of this wish of his gave him, as we recall, a lively pleasure. It was like his chivalrous self thus to hold out the right hand of fellowship to the women workers in the same field ; they felt and honoured the warm heart behind the hand. They held their session in the hall, where eighteen years before had met the group of twelve, who founded the conference of headmasters That was an incident of good omen for union between the trainers of the men and of the women of England. He graced the incident by one of the best of his addresses on educational subjects, and no more

genial occasion ever marked his long mastership, than this reception of his sisters in the craft. This was no accident. His relations towards women were very beautiful, and his truest self appeared in them. Perhaps others will bring this out.

For me, I am hastening to unyoke. But I must not do so till I account for something still left unsaid. To this latter period of Thring's life, belong the writings by which he is best known, his educational addresses, and his *Theory and Practice of Teaching*. Here is a field, and a rich one, from which I fence myself out. My reasons are, that to enter it is to trespass; and also that the scope of my own work would be confused, if I turned to criticize his books. These we do not *remember;* we *read* them. Every one can read, and judge them as well as the present writer can. Yet though I forbear to criticize, I may have helped others to do so. For here it is true, as it rarely is true, that the style was the man; and if from these pages of his companion, any light has fallen on his character, it has fallen also on his books. My testimony should only be that familiarity has not dulled the keenness of his "aculeate words," for one who heard him talk what there he has written. *Spirat adhuc amor, vivuntque calores.* The written

letter of his sermons still has for me the emotional rhythm of the living voice, and the grand single strokes of his verse persuade me still, that, with leisure and another training, he would have beaten out a noble music of his own. I, at least, have always felt the touch of poet's magic in such lines as

> *"What silence of Archangel swords*
> *Sweeps watchful round thee, Lord of Lords!"*

or in this lyric sigh for a seclusion of which he was to know so little—

> *"Peace, peace far and wide,*
> *A charmed circle, a shut door,*
> *A holy shrine,*
> *And peace upon the holy floor."*

I must however make a reference, not for a critical purpose, to the paper he read at the Carlisle Church Congress in 1884, on "The Best Means of Raising the Standard of Public Morality." He is reported to have made his mark there. On that difficult subject, his singular union of hard practical sense with religious intensity made him the best of authorities. A working man, he told us, had written to him 'your words ought to be written up in letters of gold in every great city.' But the paper is noticed here only on account of the experience out of which it was written. Among a head master's duties one is paramount—the care of his boys'

morality, technically so called. There was no duty in the discharge of which Thring's power was better shown. Testimony of a varied kind, and extending over a wide period, affords the conclusion that upon the chief evils of public school life he laid a stronger hand than any one in his generation. Parents have turned to him on the ground, that "while these evils are to be feared at all schools, at Uppingham they are faced." One of his methods he explained in the Carlisle paper. It was plain speaking. But it was plain speaking with a difference, not of the kind we hear sometimes advocated. It was the "firm unmystical" and yet religious treatment of vice, its consequences, and the delusions and exaggerations current about it.

Once a year at the confirmation time he spoke to the school in the three sets of the confirmees, the communicants, and the younger boys, with the fitting gradations of plainness, and gave the needed warnings. It is a task in which failure is easy and very mischievous; but in his handling of the matter, there was, as any who may have heard him will agree with me, a nobleness of manner, which redeemed it from any chance of misadventure. This came from that which in this war with evil was his most trenchant weapons, his own high purity. Owing

to the necessary conventions and reticences which overlie this subject, and rebuke the attempt to analyse, that virtue is often thought of as something negative, which all the good must possess, and which, in all, must be of the same order. It was no negative quality in him. I can describe the impression of it only by saying that it was a living, positive, cogent energy, a virtue which went out of him: he was pure, not as snow is, but as fire.

I shall have made an omission for which my excuse will not hold if I do not in conclusion say one word of the sudden reputation brought him, in the teaching profession, by his *Theory and Practice*. Another must speak of this at length. I will only say that the reception of the book was one we had not ventured to hope for. The warm regards it won him from a host of fellow workers, their letters, their visits to consult him, their calls on his pen, or his tongue, for addresses, "school songs," or inaugural speeches, began for him a new and happy activity, just when the prospects of his own home work were narrowing and no fresh beginnings were to be hoped. It was a great door and effectual opened from his pinfold into the world, and in his day's late evening the "grey spirit" went out to possess it.

THE WORK.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WORK.

We are at the last decade's end. Edward Thring's work at Uppingham, however it is to be judged, is done. What has that work been?

The question about him may be put in this form —Was he only a splendid schoolmaster, or was he, besides this, a founder in education? Did he give his generation only a personal influence, or also a new idea? Was his work merely good for his own time, or for the future too?

If I try to answer, it must be as a witness from within the field, with the gains and the losses of that position. But it will be as a witness who has been within the field a long time. The above question is one which exercised my callow wits, in days now so far behind me, that I was then listening, silent but not consenting, while experienced elder people discussed my headmaster's raw achieve-

ment, and concluded that "it was all very well as long as he was there."

There is no call to prove that he was a splendid schoolmaster. That is a statement which stands in need, not of proof, but of discrimination. That, in some ten years, he collected round him, on a remote spot, which had no prestige, more than 300 pupils, whose number he might at one time have vastly increased, is a solid evidence of professional power, provided it is remembered that this was done, not by catching the wind of any popular fancy, nor by any speculative ability in the educational market, nor by help of any of those striking accidents which draw the currents of popular favour. Nay, that is a tame way of putting it. He believed that his work had to be achieved, in defiance of powerful hindrances and antipathies.

Here let me digress one moment to explain a serious omission. The Making of Uppingham is not fully understood if we forget its maker's relations to a power half within, half without the school—the "governing body." To these relations I have referred only by light allusions. That has been, neither because they do not fall within my memories, nor because the matter is unimportant,

but rather because the matter is so important, and my memory has too large a share in it. The present is the crucial instance of what happens when a board, constituted as these are, is face to face with a man of original genius. Its history is of public interest. But it would come better from the hand of some one whose judgment on the facts would not seem liable to deductions on the grounds of too near and prolonged contact with them. That same contact however forbids me to leave unnoticed the action of those facts on my head-master's life.

My remark is limited to his case with the governors of the Elizabethan foundation, before the Endowed Schools Act, both because it was under them that Uppingham was made, and because it is easy to speak of them, seeing that, since that Act, they are—in their corporate capacity—as dead as Queen Elizabeth herself. And of them I shall say only that which does not admit of question, forbearing to formulate charges which, however much I credit them, I have not chosen here to examine. I shall say only, that the situation which his position towards his governors created for Thring was one of embarrassment to

the worker, and of bitterness to the man. But that is quite enough to say. The work he did stands up to plead against those whose antipathetic bearing made it painful and more difficult to do.

An individual may have human fibres which a board has not. And I am bound to remember how Thring would speak of sympathy rendered him by the hereditary representative of the founder. Old General Johnson was a good man; he was true to his blood, and had not forgotten that he was a soldier. What he said was, "Oh! Mr. Thring, you will be ruined; but I will do all I can for you—I will do all I can."

If we had here only a tale of differences between individuals, the notice of it might have been spared. But I cannot see in it so narrow an issue. The story is significant, because it is the story of what happens when an ideal aim comes into contact with the unreceptive. We are reminded once more that Thring was of those who bring on earth, not peace, but a sword. The fortunes of an ideal in struggle with the world, may be a very "ancient tale of wrong," but those who refuse to view life conventionally will not be indifferent to it because it is so ancient.

But when we forget for the moment the painful

reality of the consequences, how dramatic is the irony, which assorted with the temperament and formed habits of thought of a placid country side this incongruous, fiery enthusiasm. How, for a moment, humour rejoices against regret, and rises up to plead the excuse of a hero's neighbours. Of what ferment was he not the cause? Had he not brought into their routine and their old sphere of influence ideas which were quite new to them, and which they did not like? You cannot acquit him of that charge; and "to bring in (God shield us!) a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing."

That, in spite of these thwart currents, Thring built up his large school, proves his capacity, but does not discriminate it. The wise will ask, not, how many boys did he get? but, what did he do with them?

His praise, as master, has always seemed to me this, that he yearly sent out into the world so great a proportion of boys with sound characters. As compared with what could be shown elsewhere, I believe that proportion to have been far larger, even absolutely. To estimate it fairly however other things must be remembered. He chose, on principle, to incur risks of failure which other men

would have avoided. Neither by superannuation, nor by less formal and visible methods, did he think it right to get rid of those, who have been, by a perhaps unhappy phrase, described as "unpromising subjects." He could see promise where other men despair. He therefore encumbered his machine of discipline with much material likely to reduce, by failures, the average worth of the out-turn; and yet his failures were relatively insignificant in number, and very rarely was it shown by the issue that he had hoped too much or too long. There was a uniformity of soundness among his results, a strict correspondence, so to say, between bulk and sample, not elsewhere, as I think, to be met with, where the scale was the same. This is an assertion which is not to be proved by statistics. It has to be proved by the consensus of observers' judgments, and I can only give my own.

This is the dry statement of the fact which the desire for precision prompts. I may trust the reader's imagination to translate the fact into the more generous terms which will express its moral value. He must figure to himself what it means to have sent out every year, for the space of a generation, a group of young men, protected in a

signal degree from boyhood's disasters, and steadied against those of manhood by the principles which a moral genius had stamped upon them. He must think what it means to have given the spring of hope to a crowd of feeble, obscure spirits, who, but for him, would have been mere human lumber; and to have redeemed to wholesome life many a boy, whose animal nature, under other treatment, would have launched into the world a dangerous young man. He must ask himself what praise it is to say of a worker at the long day's end, that, save for losses beyond human love and diligence to recover, of all that have been given him he has lost none.

Jeremy Taylor is the "holy shade" of Uppingham, whose rector he was; and, in the Litanies of his *Golden Grove*, he has included the petition, "Accept the stupid and the fools to mercy." Surely, there was labouring here, on his old field, a shepherd after his own heart.

Of intellectual results, the yield was far scantier. Still, the modest crop of good scholars does not represent the true harvest. The teaching machine was not in gear for the production of scholars, as will have been seen in an early chapter. Outside requirements were, too much for success in competi-

tions, set at naught, in obedience to personal convictions, especially that of the duty of distributing equally the intellectual good things of the school. The effort to teach every boy, stupid or not, instead of seeking delusive credit by expending all the pains on gifted prize-winners, distracted, I think, from the ablest boys some of that special attention which is the birth-right of ability. The principle of equality was exaggerated; it was not seen that all might be trained well, and the best trained better. Such exaggerations however commonly attach themselves to reformations, and it was natural enough that a protest against the inequalities and injustices of his early days should lead the reformer to depress the erring scale too much. It was an exaggeration for which a price was paid. Water finds its level, and the currents of mediocrity set towards Uppingham, those of genius in other directions. But it was Thring's fame as a teacher which suffered, not the public interest; that was better served by the devotion which showed how to train the "dim, common populations," than it would have been by the career of another successful tutor of talented boys. Yet Thring's best pupils will be discontent with the writer if he does not bear a witness in their name. They owed to his

care of their minds, that for which another system would not have compensated them. Many can teach, few can inspire.

We have tried to define the sense in which he was a great schoolmaster. It is admitted that he was this, though not every one recognizes in what way. But was he also a founder in education?

To prevent confusion, let me say that I am still thinking only of his work as the organizer of a school life at Uppingham, and not of his influence by his writings upon the general field of the teaching art. And, to prevent another misapprehension, let me further say, and beg the courteous reader to note it, that both the story, and my comments on it stop with the moment when his work stopped. I write no line beyond the point where Time wrote the colophon for him, and borrow no light from any pages He may be writing since.

What I personally think was expressed in an earlier chapter. Long before his end Thring had started a reformation. That conception of justice and right method in public school life, which he had embodied by the making of Uppingham, had passed out into the country, and, without much

acknowledgment, was working the change. He had begun to achieve the object of his boyish dreams; his example was rolling away from the country the reproach of "unregarded *youth* in corners thrown," of that sad "waste of boy life" which he had early vowed he would do something to stop. This however is an individual judgment, and I state it only for the sake of sincerity. If I enlarged on it, and offered reasons for expecting that his influence has a future before it, my readers might justly pull me up, and remind me that I undertook a memory of Edward Thring, not a prophecy about him; and that for prophecy, indeed, my special position as a witness gives me no advantage over other people. What Thring himself thought, while living, of his work and its future, is my theme, and I end the chapter with an attempt to state it.

In his earlier years he resisted strenuously the popular estimate of it. This was, that his success was merely the outcome of his individuality, that he was producing, by sheer personal energy, a striking, but of necessity transient effect. No, he said with vigour, I am organizing a system, which any set of people, with reasonable ability and honest intentions, can carry out. People did not believe him, I

think ; and perhaps with his tendency to state one side of a truth at a time too absolutely, he did not enough remember that the works of man, like man himself, are flesh and spirit, an outward and an inward, a structure and a life.

In his later years his mood changed. On his efforts as founder of institutions and principles he thought failure was written. The world went on in its old way, and fashion, older or newer, was triumphing ; at any rate his beliefs were not being accepted, outside Uppingham. And within Uppingham they prevailed, but not with any promise of permanence : supporters for the most part seemed blind to their meaning, and in the system he had constructed "could see nothing but comfortable arrangements". His beliefs stood by his will, and would pass along with him.

To that, however, he had made up his mind. "It is pleasant," he would say, "when God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks" ; but if that was not to be, then he looked for a spiritual city. A life power was passing out from his field of work which would not die.

The two contrasted moods connect themselves, in my recollections, with two little incidents.

In the first, which fixed itself in my boyish memory, I overheard a man who knew Uppingham discuss the school. "Oh! Thring, you know, is a wonderful man, that is what does it. He will not have it so; says, it is the system, and that any one can carry it out; but that's as may be." So they talked then.

In the second, Thring was the speaker, in a company of two or three. Some one was regretting the departure of a common friend from his field of work elsewhere, and the probability that what he had done there would now come to nothing. "Well," said Thring, "his work is in the hearts he has won. The visible work probably won't go on. *This* is not going to go on." Then in reply to a remonstrance, "Ah! you think not; but I am old; I *know*. This will not go on."

THE MAN.

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN.

"To be a *life* has long been my prayer. In a Christian sense, as a breath of the Spirit of life, the king, *volitem vivu' per ora virum*."

The words are the beginning of a letter of Edward Thring's, in reply to a birthday greeting, ten years (for the date is not irrelevant) before his death. Men are often better interpreted by their ambitions, than even by their deeds. It is thus he names *his* ambition, and here, before I tell the last scene of my memory, I pause to read its meaning.

"To be a life." There is no word in the vocabulary, which so associates itself with the remembrance of Thring, as this word. He could hardly open his mouth, in public or in private, to speak on a serious subject, but this word must appear, and bear the weight of the argument. Turn the

leaves of a volume of his sermons, and in, one half of them, life seems the one theme, under a hundred variations. If, in conversation, he had to pass a judgment on a popular movement, or a local controversy, on a professional enterprise, or an individual's character, the same noun had to do duty, with change of epithet. In his school addresses it seemed to his audience to be the compendium of all things commendable; it covered matters so heterogeneous that it had lost descriptive force, and become the medium of a moral emotion. The mimics, it need not be said, made the word their staple: but boys' mimicry is not exclusive of reverence, and it was, at most, a nature here and there of very leaden grain, in which the word never stirred vibrations.

Believing it to be of help towards the appreciation of the character before us, I collect a few of the most usual connections in which the word would appear. The term, as is usual with terms of such an amplitude, is most easily defined by its contrasts. To begin with one of these, which will be the most readily intelligible, he was fond of contrasting life with whatever is mechanical, and belongs to convention or routine. For this he found illustrations enough in his own sphere. Life was the opposite

and foe of over-systematization in teaching, of cut and dried rules of grammar, of the multitudinous manuals, text-books, annotated editions (which he likened to the Egyptian plague of frogs): indeed of teaching from books generally, instead of by the living voice. "Let lesson books, and lesson hearers depart, and reading books and teachers, come in: exit paper, enter life." And so he would describe a teacher, whom he wished to praise, as a "great life-power" in his school. Still more, life was in danger from examinations, and the blight which they brought upon the teacher's originality. "The Inspector destroys teaching because he is bound, by law and necessity, to examine according to a given pattern; and the perfection of teaching is, that it does not work by a given pattern. Minds cannot be inspected."

Still more, again, life was in danger from the "dead hand" (his retort to the current catchword of the "dead hand of the founder") which ignorant officialism, Government or governing bodies, threatened to lay upon the living hand of the skilled workman. To this belonged his contempt for the title a "good man of business": himself a practical man of the first order, he conceived of the good man of business as a man who lost the

substance in the form, obscured facts in the manipulation of figures, or who, under cover of office fiddle-faddle and prudential maxims, pursued the art of how not to do things. This latter contempt may seem a cheap sentiment, if it did not come from one who had made much of machinery and structure in his special work, who had realized, more than other educators, the value of the permanent conditions under which their work is done, and told his American friends, that "the almighty wall is the supreme and final arbiter of schools." We are all of us able to rail at red-tape: but we cannot all do it at the same advantage as the reformer who, in his new school system, had invented and perfected a great machinery, and employed it with an acknowledged success.

More characteristic of him was the antithesis of life to intellect. Intellect was "a mighty instrumental power," which was for ever trying to usurp the honours which belonged to life, of which it should be the servant. In this connection he seemed to identify life with feeling, with "right loving and hating." The one direction in which a religious asceticism appeared in him, was in his vehement disparagement of "brain-power." It was an asceticism which obscured to him

the powerful moralizing agency of intellectual culture, its multiplying effect upon the growths of the heart, its power to liberate sympathy and quicken aspiration; and which, in hiding all this from him, threw his mind too much out of connection, at least for purposes of direct stimulus, with many cultivated minds which encountered his. Meanwhile, his antithesis, though he conceived it too absolutely, will be generally accepted, and is of course familiar. But the space which it filled in his thoughts, the animosity and heat with which an intellectual man pursued intellectuality, in days when obscurantism is most unpopular, are worth our notice. Still more is the thoroughness with which he acted out his view. For it is to this view that I attribute his practice of trusting, in his speeches, and in part of his teaching, to what may here be called, in no conventional sense, the inspiration of the moment. Of his divinity teaching, described in an early chapter, he has said to me that he never prepared a lesson: what he taught he thought out on the spot with us: a fact which explains some of the lesson's singularities. This was on principle; for his other lessons, at any rate the classical lessons with the sixth, he made a duty of going through beforehand, though he

valued them far less. But neither would he study a speech, beyond writing a list of topics, a word for each, on a slip of paper to be laid on the table.

This, at least, was his habitual, though not his invariable practice. The reason he gave for the practice was a religious one, which will look to many like a bit of quaint pietism: he was acting on the precept, not to premeditate, "for it shall be given you what ye shall speak." That we think he misread his precept, and believe that the laws of the oratorical art held good for him, as for others, does not weaken the value of the illustration. It was evidently his belief in the moral nature, as all in all, which led him to depend on the emotions as the channel of inspiration, and to undervalue preparation, because it was an act of the intellect. It was a mistake, for when the emotional force was not present, or the physical strength was low, the speeches suffered, but it was a mistake which not many men would have had the courage to make.

Still more significant of the man's inner history is the next contrast. A man of action, he was especially given to defining life as the opposite to human activities. In his philosophy Life and Force made a

dualism, which divided existence. "The mighty force-empires of the ancient world," the "clumsy idolatries of strength and praise" in all ages, "the conquerors, the crafty politicians, the keen philosophic intellects" who are "the living swords" which destroy upon earth ; or, again, pictures from nature of the subtle, tender, yielding, unforceful growth of tree and herb, the secret glory of the rushing tide of life ever flowing, were frequent among his abstract examples.

But he never remained abstract. "Never covet power," he would warn young men, with the meaning accent of experience. "Never attack, never be on the side of the destroyer." "The man who pushes knows not life." "There is no greater falsehood than putting actions first, and how we receive what comes to us, second." "Life is not doing, but bearing ; life is the inward patience which, every minute, is content to bear what that minute brings." "The whole history of man's true life is, that what is done to us and how we receive it, is life." These were no mere words. That he persistently discouraged in the young the ambition of intellectual or practical distinction, at times when nothing would so immediately have served the fortunes of the struggling school as to stimulate such feelings, is a

telling evidence of sincerity. I do not say the discouragement was never overcharged, for I think it sometimes was; that is another matter: but it is not the less evidence of a rare purity of motive, under temptations from which men of the higher order do not always come out untouched. All his admirations had this tinge: "Yes, *my hero* is gone," he said to me on the day which brought news of a beloved pupil's death on an African mission field. Not many men would have called him that, for the life was almost as obscure as it had been devoted; it had lacked not only intellectual brilliance, but visible effectiveness, and it ended just when distinction seemed within reach. But the heart of the master, a great "doer of deeds," went out in the sincerest worship towards the selfless spirit which imaged his ideal. In his own successful activities he found the blot, that he had been, by reason of the early struggles, "a man of blood," whose own hand, therefore, could not complete his work. His sense of the superiority, we will not say of the passive, but the non-militant excellences, culminated in his reverence for womanhood and the womanly genius, his mystical expression of which will be remembered by all who have heard him talk of "the great and

last revelation of the gentleness and loveliness of true life," that "all life on earth, men and women alike, is to be cleansed and glorified into the supreme excellence of womanly perfection, and that glorified humanity is the Bride of Christ."

The last contrast we notice is hardly separable from the above ; but we separate it, because it brings us to one of the most deep-rooted of the conceptions under which he imaged the world. Life was the antithesis of Success. There will be fellow-pupils of the writer who recall, how one morning in the divinity lesson he came upon the verse "these are the beginnings of sorrows," and noting that the last word should be "birth-throes," dwelt on the thought with a kindling of mood and that far-off sound in the voice, which used to tell us some inward experience had been touched. What he said about it, I for my part forget ; but the emphasis I did not forget, and its impression recurred to me when, some years later, he showed me, with a manner which indicated that this was a mode of saying something about which he much cared, a manuscript poem which he called *Childe Roland.* It was clearly the pilgrimage of his own spirit which he had framed in a few stanzas on the Frankish legend. The boy's ardours and trials of

strength, the young knight's triumphs, and then the proved warrior going down in the war against hopeless odds, with the cry upon his lips

> "'*Nay,' quoth Roland, 'by God most high,*
> *We'll show the Paynim how men die*
> *In the lost battle we have won.'*"

—these plainly were the things he had known or expected to know. "This lost battle we have won." All his intimates will think of this as his own history's self-chosen motto. It was his way of professing, with the touch of romance which tinged all his conceptions of human life, an article of belief, of which there are more familiar renderings of higher authority. A true life, he thought, was, and must be, a "lost battle." "To bring up the rear of the lost battle in a good cause is the greatest thing in the world. For the lost battle is always the victory of life later on. It is a law of nature that it must be so." These are words from his writings. In personal intercourse once and again we have known him hold this light to his own experience: "There are times when the floods go over you, when you come into the deep waters, and the very deep waters; nay, far worse, into the mire and the deep mire, shame and ruin to all that you care for most." And then, though one might have heard the like

about other men's experiences, it was strange to hear the dauntless man say with his own lips that "in the day of storm" his strength had "been as nothing"; that he had felt "all the stored-up energy of his life utterly broken down before it." But even stranger still when first heard, was the next avowal, that he had been unsuccessful upon his chosen professional field in all that really engaged his heart's wishes. "I have been disappointed in every object that I framed for myself since I came here . . . . . all this place is as nothing to me. I am *not* part and parcel of it as I seem to be: it is all nothing to me, and the *life* is everything. . . . . My work here is *not mine*, though I have done nothing but fight for it; God has moulded it: it is not what I should have chosen, and it is *not* mine; therefore it lives."

There is doubtless nothing in these extended illustrations which has not been felt and said before by others. But we are now in that moral region where there can be no originality, other than that of the new intensity, with which a mind realizes a primal human fact. The higher spirits among those who are united by the same creed, when they try to read the meaning of their universe, can but find

their way to one and the same eventual mystery. They will differ only in the several names which they will give it, according to that ruling element in their several natures which gives them their contact with divine things. Its name will be Light for the subtle spirit; Love for the ardent; and the strong will call it Life. One or other of such large words will be the chosen abstraction, which gathers up into a focus the manifold of human duty, experience, and hope: they are symbols by which the mind apprehends the inexpressible central law, wings on which it broods over the unfathomed deep. To have been fascinated by one of these vague symbols; to have made it the summary of all thought; and to have insisted on it with disciples even to monotony, has before now been recognized as the mark—not of barrenness or ineffectuality—but of an intellect deeply spiritual.

He of whom we write had chosen for his watchword—Life; and the purpose of these illustrations and instances has been, not to prove that he enriched the world with any new material of thought, but to indicate what was the order and rank of his nature, in what special company of the greater spirits his affinities place him. He who writes can claim for his judgment no credit, beyond that due to a long

attention, and a consistent development of that judgment under circumstances by which a raw conclusion is most shrewdly tested. The boy's early thought of his hero is the man's latest. As soon as I could give any name to the vague reverences which he inspired, it seemed to me that in him I found the meaning of the title, "a man of faith." And now, if I try to characterize him, I cannot find in any school, class, party, movement, or influence, to which he might by circumstances belong, any type on which he is modelled. To name his spiritual descent, I must open the Old Testament at those early pages from which, for many of us who looked on them with his eyes, his memory rises like a mist, and read the words:— "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee." Last, as first, he is to me the man of faith; the man whose root is not in the world of sense, and to whom the invisible is the real.

It will be the best proof of the worth of this definition if, by its light, this life so full of chequered action, and this character so rich in contrasts, become consistent and luminous: if the strength is accounted for, the contradictions reconciled, and

the weaknesses interpreted. We think it will be found to be so.

In the field of action Edward Thring's success would be assigned by ordinary observers to four prominent characteristics: they are his courage, energy, enthusiasm, and concentration. These four escaped no eyes. I will add a fifth which was not recognized by all and at once—his practical intelligence. The popular idea of these characteristics was, that he was born so, that nature had given him more "pluck" and "go" than she gives to one man in half a million, and this was all about it. We think, on the contrary, that if no more can be said, nothing has been said: he has been left uncharacterized. To us, each of these capacities, however undeniably a natural endowment, owed its distinctive quality and actual productiveness to a motive power not classed among natural gifts.

His energy, that vivacious, militant, sanguine, tenacious energy, so prompt and assiduous and vigilant,—it was so everywhere and on the surface, that people took it for the whole account of him: the energy was the man. In truth, it was the mask which disguised the man. Under the air of invincibility, we came to know there could be the qualms and faintings of a mind which, again and

again, looked defeat in the face: beneath the front of flinty resistance to wrong-doing, or oppression, or scorn, smarted a tremulous sensitiveness as of a woman: among the brave shows of his prospering and picturesque activities, the central figure of the pageant carried often a sick heart in a sick body. His courage? Was it an animal pugnacity or mere native hardihood of spirit, which staked his well-being, money and repute, the fortune of home, wife and child, upon a venture which friends thought fatuous, and which, by its own terms, denied itself beforehand the prizes even of success? Was it simple bravery, of instinct or of discipline, which kept his feet firm when, in his own words, "the floods went over him, the deep waters of the proud." For what soldiers' hearts feel under fire, we must after all trust what they say of themselves, and what this one has said is, that he felt utterly broken down, that all the stored up energy of his life was as nothing before the storm. His concentration? That singular power he had of putting the full self into every act, even into the least of them, so that the whole frame of the man seemed to be at the back of every stroke he struck, it was neither a mere inborn way of doing things, nor was it a matter of skill, akin to the military art of being

present at each point in force: it was the momentum given by a moral passion behind nerve and sinew, a passion so expansive that the lightest touch of the smallest of duties set it free, as if all were at stake, and brought down upon the narrowest of opportunities the sledge hammer of the entire nature. And, above all, his enthusiasm? Is this to be counted an affair of buoyant temperament, of sanguine conviction of self-importance, a generous overflow of egotism? It was certainly the most potent of all his efficient qualities; it dragged along in his wake, struggling but overcome, the weight of official inertia and dislike outside the school, and neutralized in a marvellous degree the doubts, criticisms, and reluctances within it; it did among his boys the greatest things he achieved, and it converted many an error, by a splendid *tour de force*, into a success. More than all, it was the force which held fast the keystone of the fabric: it ministered and kept alive that sense of the infinite preciousness of a human life, out of which came the homely principle, that "every boy must be taught and cared for," which he raised a school to embody. But where did the enthusiasm come from? If it was only born in the flesh, a special mode of physical and emotional energy, it

would have fluctuated and waned along with the causes of it, as such ardours do in a thousand hot youths. But this was a fast colour; we saw it grow mellower, but never worn. And the expressions and media of the inward fervour, that lighting up and dilation of the eye, that shock of solemnity in the voice, at which we have seen strangers thrilled on an encounter, and placid audiences caught up into alertness—these were not the physical accomplishment of a public man; there was no trick in it, for iteration never staled it, and it was more witnessed behind the scenes than on them. No! That enthusiasm, of which the brilliant and persistent flow seemed, to many, only a very generous gift of nature, if it had fountain heads in constitutional vivacity and emotional fulness, was fed more securely from a less inconstant reservoir. We believe the account of it, which he gave in private often, but which he has also given among the latest of his public words. "I do not understand how any one can keep fresh as a teacher, when the first enthusiasm has worn off, excepting from a feeling of doing work for Christ."

We reserved, as less generally recognized, the fifth characteristic of practical intelligence. That is not a trait which obviously connects itself with the reli-

gious quality of faith. Nor do we assign to any such explanation his shrewd apprehension of fact, and, in particular, his imaginative grasp of a boy's character, and of the action upon it of his outward conditions and the machinery of school. But in the faculty which dealt, not with details, but their principles; in that largeness of comprehension, that eye for the whole field; in that unselfish choice of his principles, and unswerving adhesion to them, without compromise or surrender; in his certainty that they would win, because they were the expression of "moral facts"; yes, and also in his statesmanly sense of the room and time required for the action of general laws, and the unrolling of consequences; in his patience, and sobriety, and refusal to snatch at results, because "life is much longer than people think"—in all these we have thought we could trace, unmistakably, the inspiration which derives from "the evidence of things not seen."

We have tried to name the secret of a great character, by tracing its outward activities back to one spiritual principle, which inspired and unified them. But that is a line of reasoning which is incomplete without other testimony. A man's faith

is best shown by his works—except to his intimates. To them it is known by an evidence of which you cannot say, it is here, or, it is there.

This friend of ours held among his paradoxes that a man is best known by his dreams, for that, when the sleep of the will unbends the deliberate self-control, which shapes our waking conduct but has not yet passed into the stage of vital, necessary habit, then the instinctive plays unrebuked, and its phantasms register the level of solid moral attainment. We will apply his principle, and argue that the true springs of this nature were best seen in hours when the war-harness of the active life was off, and he was speaking his mind without effort, and without wariness. A testimony to such hours of self-disclosure would best tell what spirit he was of.

But it is a testimony we cannot render, for want of the skill. Some words only we add for the sake of a few readers here and there, to whom they will be, in a phrase familiar to their lost friend's lip, *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν*, articulate to those who knew him. These may thank us for any hint or recorded trifle which starts in their mind a spring of memory, as a waft from a cotter's peat fire revives the moorland ramble and some secret holiday of the soul.

One hears again the slow step, firm still, but halting, on the gravel, and meets him coming in from the October sunshine. The big serious-minded colley settles himself on the mat outside, as if for a long watch. His master, with a warning look (a look of which the dog knows the gravity) comes in and takes the low easy-chair with a protest—for those athletic joints have known rheumatism. The tea cups have been pushed aside, the child on his knee, in no hurry to leave it, has been sent to what he names "the shades above," and we are talking the summer holidays over, and the good folk of Borth, from whose sands he has come back, browner and heartier, with repose and freshened vivacity in his air. Then there is discussion of the paper he has been asked to prepare for a conference, or a letter from an old boy, or a message of sympathy from strangers overseas, who want to know more of the teacher whose last book has laid hold of them; and oh! by the way, what *do* we think is the new idea he has got about school work? he never was more delighted than when he hit on it. So it runs on, for this evening he has a little time, and is not so "hunted" as sometimes. Then, as the sunset pours reddening up from the sky-line of green Rutland hill top, his voice takes a new range.

From the shallows of talk on things of to-day and yesterday, suddenly he pushes out into the deep waters of speculations that are of no one day, but of all, and at once we are on the great sea, between the horizon-ring and the bare cope. The *terra firma* of the actual and personal, of the trivial and momentary, has vanished: all is solitary, rarefied, immense. To listeners who were no philosophers at other moments, his tones have lent, if not indeed the vision, yet some of the emotion and the thrill of "spectators of all time and all existence." How comes it about? He has spoken nothing so new or illuminating; it is what others could say, though few would. It is the mood which affects us, not the thought; the accent, not the words. There were fibres in us which gave us intelligence that the man beside us could speak of the land of mystery, with knowledge of it; he seemed to breathe that climate, as if its atmosphere had been familiar to his thoughts, and to walk with a sure tread as if in a home. Communion with deep matters had stamped their mark upon his bearing. If the Florentines traced on their stern poet's face a shadow from the ghostly realm his mind had traversed, we felt the like; when this man talked of realities in the world beyond sense, we read the sign

of a witness in the deepened air, the gray illumination spreading over the eye, and murmured inwardly "See the man who has been there."

We have not said the thing we wished to say, but neither could we leave it unattempted. For to us, better far than in the best of his genial or severe activities, the true man was revealed in the still moments of self-expression. Our chosen memory of him is the rapt, but tranquil face, mellowed in the autumn afterglow, and he is saying over a remembered lost one, "To me, more and more, death is nothing: there is no such thing as death, no such thing as death."

Ah! great and living heart, who could so make us sure of it as you?

"UNTIL THE EVENING."

What shall the brave in soul attain
Who shape a thought in act and life,
What guerdon to redeem the pain,
What victor palm beyond the strife,
When the worn spirits pass to wait
In silence with the silent great?

Men say, "It were reward for all—
For hours of strife an age of fame!"
Ah! faint, methinks, the echoes fall
Of mortals' praise or mortals' blame,
When breaks upon the widening soul
The deep archangel trumpet-roll.

Nay, brothers, 'neath the Eternal Eyes
One human joy shall touch the just,—
To know their spirit's heirs arise
And lift their purpose from the dust;
The father's passion arms the son,
And the great deed goes on, goes on.

1878.

CHAPTER XI.

"UNTIL THE EVENING."

THE summer of 1887 was the thirty-fourth summer which Edward Thring had seen at Uppingham. Perhaps it will be long before any headmaster of a great school attains to "the years of Thring." And those thirty-four had been years of rarely intermitted strain. "Have I ever had a moment's peace, one moment's peace?" he once said to us, speaking of the life-long denial of leisure for pure intellectual effort. It was getting time now for rest, for that interval of quiet before the last going hence, which I once had heard him sigh for, long ago. Yet rest was not so easy to find. It might have come by way of preferment. A speaker at the tercentenary had remarked, that "had Mr. Thring's commanding talents and matchless energy been employed in any other branch of the public service, he would, by this time, be a man

whom his country would have delighted to honour." But the way of patronage is as "the way of an eagle in the air." No least breath of suggestion that he felt this neglect ever escaped him. But his thoughts, as I have since learnt, turned now towards retirement, the opportunities of which did not lie in his own hands.

This summer holiday opened in gloom. From his retreat at Birnam, he wrote a letter, upon practical questions then weighing on his spirits, which sounded a sadder note than I remember, among not a few written in difficult times. On those questions I do not think it well to say anything. I will speak only of that which their merits do not affect. It was the letter of a man, "weary and ill and battered," going down to his last battle, and knowing it must be lost. "My hands are full of trouble, and full of work, and now I see no end of it any more. I am done for. . . . A little more work . . . and 'then cometh the end.' Ay, the life cannot be destroyed. The life which has gone forth will live on. . . . I may be wrong, but I think the cause of those who work, and suffer, and are oppressed, is my cause, and I will not give it up . . . I mean, in a quiet, set way, to fight." Readers of his verse will understand my allusion—he had

come, I thought, to the last canto of his *Childe Roland.*

"But," he added, "it is easy to be weary, and ill, and battered, without being *unhappy*." The Grampian air put heart into him, and a few weeks later I was reading, "the holidays, though very quiet, and somewhat worried, have set me up again, and I feel ready."

Ah! for what?

He was ready enough, in the sense he meant. At this end of his sixty-sixth year, he was fully equal to his work; brain, nerve, judgment, showed no enfeeblement; if the physical strength was hard taxed, at that age, by the exacting calls and hours of a schoolmaster, it was he, not the work, that suffered. One or two critics, who disagreed with him on some point of policy, hinted, I remember, that there was some failure of his powers. The suggestion was an idle one.

There was mellowing only. The strength, though unsubdued, had been refined. Time, and other influences, especially the growing reverence outside his own circle for his powers and achievements, had softened asperities, given his mind more accessibility to other views, and sweetened all his intercourse. Something of the oracular genius

of age had gathered upon him, a dignified and gentle authority: there was a kind of disinterestedness in his public utterances, as of one who had grown mentally detached from his exclusive work, and could speak with a more impartial wisdom. Boys felt the growing gentleness, and we have watched those audiences more deeply penetrated by addresses in this discriminating and allowing vein, than even by his righteous thunders, though these would go far into boys' hearts. And he was happier. It was some two years ago that, as he preached, a deeper shade of stillness fell upon the chapel, at the words, "I for my part, having found life brighten onwards, in all true brightness, quietly expect that it will be so to the end; and the grave, whatever it looks like, be a happy door to happy life to come."

Early in October, a public occasion took him to Worcester, the guest of the Deanery. A day or two later he said "Let us have a walk." This was a little event, for he had long given up the old walks, and taken to deck-pacing and gardening in "Fairfield." It was that early autumn weather, when the Rutland landscape, which gets summer late but keeps it long, wears its best grace. He went just far enough to gain

the prospect of it from Beaumont Chase, over the woods of the Eye Valley. All the way he talked of his Worcester visit. It had been a wonderful pleasure: but he was more than pleased; he was moved. He had met with a cordiality from his hosts, a sympathetic recognition from his audiences, which were warm about his heart. It seemed to him a strange new happiness, to have entered, for a three days' space, a circle where nothing met him but tender regards and honour, a halcyon-close in a ring of storms. "After this life of mine here, it was like a glimpse of another world." He always, no doubt, made much of things: that was nature with him: but this tranquil, brooding enthusiasm struck me, then, as unlike anything I had seen in him before. There was a refreshment and freedom of spirit, as if he were a war-worn king, come home from a dewy Avalon.

Ah! no: Avalon lay not behind him, but before.

Looking back upon it, we can give a name to this blissful mood. In a fashion most quiet and beautiful, he was "*fey*."

On Friday afternoon, October 14th, returning from another walk, he met the stream of boys coming back up the hill from their games. They paid attention to the fact, for it was unusual to see him

there at that hour, and remarked in their houses afterwards, how "the old man" had met them on the hill, and given them a grin as they passed. Not much more than a week later, one of them, a little fellow, and fresh from home, was recalling, how "he looked so happy when he went by us: I can see him now, turning to look at us, with the sun on his face."

"The sun on his face." Ay, youngster, do you know why that was? He was "stepping westward."

On the next evening, it fell to him to read, as the last verse of the Psalms, at his schoolhouse prayers, the words, "So he fed them with a faithful and true heart: and ruled them prudently with all his power." That flock of his was never to hear him read the Psalms again among them, and in those last words Fate wrote the motto on his shepherding.

There were no more walks for him. On the next Sunday morning, while the Litany was saying, we looked up, to find that he had risen from his knees, and was sitting, pale and in pain, on his chair in the chancel. He rose indeed, and began to read the Communion office: but not to-day, nor ever again, were we to hear the stern "Thou shalt"

and "Thou shalt not" of the law, in those awe-compelling tones which used to seem the truest of its human echoes. The labouring voice ceased with the Collect: he resigned the book, and walked down the nave, between our wondering rows. In all his four-and-thirty years weakness had never made him leave his chapel. He would take no help. One of his family went out with him, and to him he said "I never felt ill like this before." He had not visibly ailed, but had been working up to this morning, and his sermon for the afternoon was ready: going to his desk on a later day, to write news of the issue to his friends, I found it lying between the blotting-sheets. It was a sudden chill, we thought, and, for a few days at least, he must be laid by, as once in the previous year. Next morning he thought himself better. "I shall be in school to-morrow: well, no, not to *first* school, perhaps." But, on the night of that to-morrow, he was lying fevered, and, in his sick fancies, writing, writing with restless fingers imaginary sheet after sheet. Where those dreams came from, we knew. Next day he sent for me, wishing to dictate a letter. A caution was given that every excitement must be avoided, but the firm voice and collected manner, during the dicta-

tion, made it hard to think him very ill. But then came the signing. For a moment the pen scratched helplessly about, failing to form characters; then came a blurred tracery on the paper of which I could tell him, "they can see what it is meant for." *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Those forceful, imperious strokes of his shaken into this impotent blur!

It was a letter of gravest import. But it was to be cancelled by the handwriting of a mightier arbiter.

We might not talk, but he asked anxiously "Is the work going on all right?" and being reassured, said, with quiet relief, "That is good." They were, as it proved, my chief's parting words to me, and they seemed fit to be the last.

On Thursday, consulting physicians arrived, and, late in the day, his condition was pronounced very serious. That night there was an entertainment in the schoolroom, a Shakespeare recitation, and the news of the headmaster's danger crept about the audience, like a hand setting down the lights. "But, no," we thought, "he is so strong, so grand a fighter: and when has he lost a fight?"

But, on Friday, we knew he could not win this one. There was inflammation of the lungs which a younger man might have survived, but not he, with

his burden of life-long cares, weighing heaviest on him at this moment.

What would we not have given for one conscious word from our leader ere he left us masterless? It was not to be. He was light-headed, and unconscious, for the most part, of who were by him.

Once, however, when I was brought to his bedside, the face and voice, unfamiliar there, fixed his mind for the moment; he looked up, gave me my name, and said, "I'll tell you what it is" (he had been insisting with the nurses that he must get up), "these women are wanting to set the doctors' orders against my common sense: if they'll let me alone I shall be all right." The voice was still so strong, and the vivacity of the manner so pathetically like his old sallies against the ways of doctors, that a flicker of ignorant hope rose in my heart.

This was in the late afternoon. There was no more articulate speech, and the delirium grew. The murmurs of it crept, through the floors of the old schoolhouse, to the silent group in the room below him. What a weird thing it was to listen to!—the strong mind wandering helpless, lost, among shadows, like a ghost already. We separated, to wait and rest. Of *him*, there is no more to tell.

Yet our thoughts of him in this last hour, are not they too a memory of Edward Thring?

Here, in this very room, and at this hour, the hand of a young boy first crossed his, and a young boy sat and looked at him, from the very spot where I sit now alone. And now there can be no hand crossed at the parting, no word exchanged: nothing but the throb of struggling breath, to give token that death's chariot of fire has come between him and his. Ah! What is death not taking from us? "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

A few hours later we knew the last was at hand. I left the house to call some one to his bedside, and, as I passed through the familiar boyish quarters, and under the gate where I first entered them, the stars looked strangely keen in the frosty night. But the sense of fate heightens all things round us. And into that starry night his spirit will pass.

By the bedside we read for him his *Nunc Dimittis.* The sacrament of the dying it was not his to receive, but not often does soldier set out on his last march less needing his viaticum.

What more? The darkness thinned, and on the hills, from beyond the gables of Archdeacon Johnson's ancient school, a calm autumn dawn came

up, and fell rosily on the rimed trees under the schoolhouse windows. How different from that wild autumn evening, of which he has so often told us, when the storm howled about and shook those windows, that first time he sat within them!

There came the feet of his scholars streaming past his door, to be stilled by the message read upon it, and to pass on, and mingle with their worship a prayer for their shepherd "at the point of departure." And then it came upon the mind, as we watched the labour of death, and the last sighs escaping him—"this school-hour of the week is his *free morning*." Yes, it is the worn master's free morning in very deed. Our hands must close the lids over those dauntless eyes, for a hero has changed his life.

Semen est sanguis beroum.

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